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Eric Korn: the Bloomsday celebrations in Dublin

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JULY 2 1982

Ancient Greece 721	Modern History 707-08
Art 722	Natural History 727
Bibliography 726	Philosophy 713
Biography 711	Poetry 720
Commentary 716-18	Politics 709
European History 723	Social Anthropology 724
Fiction 710, 725	Social Studies 714
Literary Criticism 712	Sociology 715

INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

ALVAREZ, A. <i>Life After Marriage: Scenes from Divorce</i> [Rosemary Dinnage]	714
BARAK, MICHEL <i>Fractures aux P.C.F.: Des Communistes parlent</i> [Douglas Johnson]	715
BARNARD, ROBERT <i>Death and the Princess</i> [T. J. Binyon]	725
BENTLEY, URSULA <i>The Natural Order</i> [Lindsay Duguid]	725
BEST, GEORGE <i>War and Society in Revolutionary Europe, 1770-1870</i> [Norman Hampson]	725
BOURDIER, ROGER, and others <i>Le PCF: Essai sur quinze ans de son histoire 1965-1981</i> [Douglas Johnson]	725
BRIGGS, DESMOND <i>The Partners</i> [D. J. Enright]	725
BROOKS, MARGARET, and KNIGHT, CHARLES <i>A Complete Guide to British Butterflies</i> [Jean Mellanby]	725

<i>Cahiers du communisme: 24e Congrès du parti communiste français, Février 1982</i> [Douglas Johnson]	725
CORBURN, ANDREW <i>Company Secrets</i> [T. J. Binyon]	725
ELLIS, ALICE THOMAS <i>The 27th Kingdom</i> [Linda Taylor]	725
FERNÁNDEZ-ARMESTO, FELIPE <i>The Canary Islands After the Conquest</i> [Geoffrey Scammell]	725
FINKEL, DONALD <i>What Manner of Beast</i> [Jay Parini]	725
FINLEY, M. I. <i>Economy and Society in Ancient Greece</i> [S. C. Humphreys]	725
FRASER, ANTONIA <i>Cool Repentance</i> [T. J. Binyon]	725
FRYS, NORTON <i>The Great Code: The Bible and Literature</i> [Rachel Trickett]	725
GOEBEL, JULIUS <i>The Struggle for the Falkland Islands: A Study in Legal and Diplomatic History</i> [H. S. Ferns]	725
GOLDING, MAURICE, and QUILLES, YVONNE <i>Sous le marteau, la plume: la presse communiste en crise</i> [Douglas Johnson]	725
HARE, R. M. <i>Moral Thinking</i> [R. B. Brandt]	725
HILL, REGINALD <i>Who Guards a Prince</i> [T. J. Binyon]	725
HINCKES, FRANÇOIS <i>Le Parti communiste au carrefour: Essai sur quinze ans de son histoire 1965-1981</i> [Douglas Johnson]	725
HODNETT, EDWARD <i>Image and Text: Studies in the Illustration of English Literature</i> [William Weaver]	725

INNES, MICHAEL <i>Sheiks and Adders</i> [T. J. Binyon]	725
JUDD, DENIS <i>Lord Reading</i> [Peter Clarke]	725
KENNEDY, MICHAEL L. <i>The Jacobin Clubs in the French Revolution</i> [William Scott]	725
KING, J. C. H. <i>Artificial Cusillates from the Northwest Coast of America</i> [Redmond O'Hanlon]	725
KOPFZ, HANS-JOACHIM (Editor) <i>Gutenberg-Jahrbuch 1981</i> [D. L. Paisley]	725
KURER, ADAM <i>Wives for Cattle: Bridewealth and Marriage in Southern Africa</i> [Eva Gillies]	725
KURER, LEO <i>Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century. International Action Against Genocide</i> [Michael Banton]	725
LADURIE, EMMANUEL LE ROY <i>Paris-Montpellier: P. C. - P. S. U. 1945-1963</i> [Douglas Johnson]	725
LAMBKE, MICHAEL <i>Human Spirits: A Cultural Account of Trance in Mayotte</i> [T. M. Lewis]	725
LEVINS, PHILIP <i>One for the Rose</i> [Jay Parini]	725
LEVITAN, SAR A., and BELOUS, RICHARD S. <i>What's Happening to the American Family?</i> [Roselind Mitchison]	725

LEWIN, MICHAEL Z. <i>Missing Woman</i> [T. J. Binyon]	725
LOAR, BRIAN <i>Mind and Meaning</i> [P. F. Strawson]	725
MARSHALL, GORDON <i>In Search of the Spirit of Capitalism: An Essay on Max Weber's Protestant Ethic Thesis</i> [Zygmunt Bauman]	725
MORGAN, FREDERICK <i>Northbook</i> [Jay Parini]	725
NEWMAN, G. F. <i>The Men with the Guns</i> [David Profumo]	725
OUTHWAIT, R. B. (Editor) <i>Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage</i> [Roselind Mitchison]	725

PARKIN, FRANK <i>Max Weber</i> [Zygmunt Bauman]	725
PETROPOULOS, YANNI <i>Tulips, Arabesques and Turbans: Decorative Arts from the Ottoman Empire</i> [Robin Cormack]	725
PONTIERO, GIOVANNI <i>Diese on Tour: Guido Noccioni's Diaries, 1906-07</i> [Brigid Brophy]	725
RENFREW, COLIN, and WAGSTAFF, MALCOLM (Editors) <i>An Island Policy: The archaeology of exploitation in Melos</i> [A. M. Snodgrass]	725
SAMMUT, ALFONSO <i>Unfredo di Cio: Un'opera di un umanista italiano</i> [Condr Fahy]	725
SEWART, ALAN <i>Close Your Eyes and Sleep, My Baby</i> [T. J. Binyon]	725
SNELL, ROBERT <i>Théophile Gautier</i> [Norman Bryson]	725
STORREY, DAVID <i>A Prodigal Child</i> [Peter Kemp]	725
SZIKSIS, GEORGE <i>November and May</i> [Tim Dooley]	725
TARTAKOWSKY, DANIELLE <i>Une Histoire du P. C. F.</i> [Douglas Johnson]	725
TURNBULL, PETER <i>Dead Knock</i> [T. J. Binyon]	725
WALENS, STANLEY <i>Feasting with Cannibals: An Essay on Kwakwaka'nam Cosmology</i> [K. O. L. Burridge]	725
WILKINSON, GERALD <i>A History of Britain's Trees</i> [Scott Lethbridge]	725
WINSTON, RICHARD <i>Thomas Mann</i> [T. J. Reed]	725

Cinema <i>Georgia's Friends</i> (Various cinemas) [Richard Combs]	725
Exhibitions <i>The Houghton Library 1942-1982</i> (Harvard University) [Alan Bell]	725
<i>Macchietto</i> (City Art Gallery, Manchester) [Kate Flint]	725
Theatre <i>Kalderas, Parca</i> (Schaubühne am Lehnert Platz, Berlin) [Ronald Hayman]	725
<i>Per Oya</i> (The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon) [Michael Meyer]	725
Broadcasting <i>1982</i> (Eric Kohn)	725
ESTC six years on [Robert Alston]	725

Poems by Keith Botley, Dick Davis, Geoffrey Gribson, Anthony Thwaite	725
Letters on Sibilla Alarimo, Emily Dickinson and Counter-tenors	725
Among this week's contributors	725
Author	725
Fifty years on	725

Commentary	725
<i>Georgia's Friends</i> (Various cinemas) [Richard Combs]	725
<i>Macchietto</i> (City Art Gallery, Manchester) [Kate Flint]	725
<i>Kalderas, Parca</i> (Schaubühne am Lehnert Platz, Berlin) [Ronald Hayman]	725
<i>Per Oya</i> (The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon) [Michael Meyer]	725
Broadcasting <i>1982</i> (Eric Kohn)	725
ESTC six years on [Robert Alston]	725

Poems by Keith Botley, Dick Davis, Geoffrey Gribson, Anthony Thwaite	725
Letters on Sibilla Alarimo, Emily Dickinson and Counter-tenors	725
Among this week's contributors	725
Author	725
Fifty years on	725

Commentary	725
<i>Georgia's Friends</i> (Various cinemas) [Richard Combs]	725
<i>Macchietto</i> (City Art Gallery, Manchester) [Kate Flint]	725
<i>Kalderas, Parca</i> (Schaubühne am Lehnert Platz, Berlin) [Ronald Hayman]	725
<i>Per Oya</i> (The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon) [Michael Meyer]	725
Broadcasting <i>1982</i> (Eric Kohn)	725
ESTC six years on [Robert Alston]	725

Poems by Keith Botley, Dick Davis, Geoffrey Gribson, Anthony Thwaite	725
Letters on Sibilla Alarimo, Emily Dickinson and Counter-tenors	725
Among this week's contributors	725
Author	725
Fifty years on	725

Commentary	725
<i>Georgia's Friends</i> (Various cinemas) [Richard Combs]	725
<i>Macchietto</i> (City Art Gallery, Manchester) [Kate Flint]	725
<i>Kalderas, Parca</i> (Schaubühne am Lehnert Platz, Berlin) [Ronald Hayman]	725
<i>Per Oya</i> (The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon) [Michael Meyer]	725
Broadcasting <i>1982</i> (Eric Kohn)	725
ESTC six years on [Robert Alston]	725

Poems by Keith Botley, Dick Davis, Geoffrey Gribson, Anthony Thwaite	725
Letters on Sibilla Alarimo, Emily Dickinson and Counter-tenors	725
Among this week's contributors	725
Author	725
Fifty years on	725

Commentary	725
<i>Georgia's Friends</i> (Various cinemas) [Richard Combs]	725
<i>Macchietto</i> (City Art Gallery, Manchester) [Kate Flint]	725
<i>Kalderas, Parca</i> (Schaubühne am Lehnert Platz, Berlin) [Ronald Hayman]	725
<i>Per Oya</i> (The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon) [Michael Meyer]	725
Broadcasting <i>1982</i> (Eric Kohn)	725
ESTC six years on [Robert Alston]	725

Poems by Keith Botley, Dick Davis, Geoffrey Gribson, Anthony Thwaite	725
Letters on Sibilla Alarimo, Emily Dickinson and Counter-tenors	725
Among this week's contributors	725
Author	725
Fifty years on	725

Commentary	725
<i>Georgia's Friends</i> (Various cinemas) [Richard Combs]	725
<i>Macchietto</i> (City Art Gallery, Manchester) [Kate Flint]	725
<i>Kalderas, Parca</i> (Schaubühne am Lehnert Platz, Berlin) [Ronald Hayman]	725
<i>Per Oya</i> (The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon) [Michael Meyer]	725
Broadcasting <i>1982</i> (Eric Kohn)	725
ESTC six years on [Robert Alston]	725

Poems by Keith Botley, Dick Davis, Geoffrey Gribson, Anthony Thwaite	725
Letters on Sibilla Alarimo, Emily Dickinson and Counter-tenors	725
Among this week's contributors	725
Author	725
Fifty years on	725

Commentary	725
<i>Georgia's Friends</i> (Various cinemas) [Richard Combs]	725
<i>Macchietto</i> (City Art Gallery, Manchester) [Kate Flint]	725
<i>Kalderas, Parca</i> (Schaubühne am Lehnert Platz, Berlin) [Ronald Hayman]	725
<i>Per Oya</i> (The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon) [Michael Meyer]	725
Broadcasting <i>1982</i> (Eric Kohn)	725
ESTC six years on [Robert Alston]	725

Poems by Keith Botley, Dick Davis, Geoffrey Gribson, Anthony Thwaite	725
Letters on Sibilla Alarimo, Emily Dickinson and Counter-tenors	725
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Author	725
Fifty years on	725

Commentary	725
<i>Georgia's Friends</i> (Various cinemas) [Richard Combs]	725
<i>Macchietto</i> (City Art Gallery, Manchester) [Kate Flint]	725
<i>Kalderas, Parca</i> (Schaubühne am Lehnert Platz, Berlin) [Ronald Hayman]	725
<i>Per Oya</i> (The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon) [Michael Meyer]	725
Broadcasting <i>1982</i> (Eric Kohn)	725
ESTC six years on [Robert Alston]	725

Poems by Keith Botley, Dick Davis, Geoffrey Gribson, Anthony Thwaite	725
Letters on Sibilla Alarimo, Emily Dickinson and Counter-tenors	725
Among this week's contributors	725
Author	725
Fifty years on	725

Commentary	725
<i>Georgia's Friends</i> (Various cinemas) [Richard Combs]	725
<i>Macchietto</i> (City Art Gallery, Manchester) [Kate Flint]	725
<i>Kalderas, Parca</i> (Schaubühne am Lehnert Platz, Berlin) [Ronald Hayman]	725
<i>Per Oya</i> (The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon) [Michael Meyer]	725
Broadcasting <i>1982</i> (Eric Kohn)	725
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Commentary	725
<i>Georgia's Friends</i> (Various cinemas) [Richard Combs]	725
<i>Macchietto</i> (City Art Gallery, Manchester) [Kate Flint]	725
<i>Kalderas, Parca</i> (Schaubühne am Lehnert Platz, Berlin) [Ronald Hayman]	725
<i>Per Oya</i> (The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon) [Michael Meyer]	725
Broadcasting <i>1982</i> (Eric Kohn)	725
ESTC six years on [Robert Alston]	725

Poems by Keith Botley, Dick Davis, Geoffrey Gribson, Anthony Thwaite	725
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Among this week's contributors	725
Author	725
Fifty years on	725

Commentary	725
<i>Georgia's Friends</i> (Various cinemas) [Richard Combs]	725
<i>Macchietto</i> (City Art Gallery, Manchester) [Kate Flint]	725
<i>Kalderas, Parca</i> (Schaubühne am Lehnert Platz, Berlin) [Ronald Hayman]	725
<i>Per Oya</i> (The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon) [Michael Meyer]	725
Broadcasting <i>1982</i> (Eric Kohn)	725
ESTC six years on [Robert Alston]	725

Poems by Keith Botley, Dick Davis, Geoffrey Gribson, Anthony Thwaite	725
Letters on Sibilla Alarimo, Emily Dickinson and Counter-tenors	725
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Author	725
Fifty years on	725

Commentary	725
<i>Georgia's Friends</i> (Various cinemas) [Richard Combs]	725
<i>Macchietto</i> (City Art Gallery, Manchester) [Kate Flint]	725
<i>Kalderas, Parca</i> (Schaubühne am Lehnert Platz, Berlin) [Ronald Hayman]	725
<i>Per Oya</i> (The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon) [Michael Meyer]	725
Broadcasting <i>1982</i> (Eric Kohn)	725
ESTC six years on [Robert Alston]	725

Poems by Keith Botley, Dick Davis, Geoffrey Gribson, Anthony Thwaite	725
Letters on Sibilla Alarimo, Emily Dickinson and Counter-tenors	725
Among this week's contributors	725
Author	725
Fifty years on	725

A Party and its past

Douglas Johnson

What is this strange party which, at the present moment, chooses to interrogate its past? So writes, of the French Communist Party, Jean Burles, one of its leading intellectuals and the editor of its weekly publication, *Revolution*. He thereby seeks to suggest that the present situation, whereby the party is both in power, and yet held in the power of the Socialists (this is how *Le Canard Enchaîné* put it) - just as in 1830 Louis-Philippe, Duke of Orleans, was both of the blood royal and covered in it - is to be explained and understood in terms of recent history. For some twenty-five years past, it is claimed, the Party has failed to respond to the necessities of the modern world: this is the famous "retard de 1956". It is a claim which is treated with derision. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, who until 1965 was an active member of the Party, has no faith in its attitude to what he calls "la factualité historique". And while he believes that "le droit à l'histoire" must be one of the conditions for any future democratization of the Party, so he is cynical as to its possible achievement. "On a toujours le droit de reconstruire le passé. On ne sait jamais demain de quel côté sera fait."

For Maurice Goldring and Yvonne Quilès, former journalists and contributors to such Communist reviews as *La Nouvelle Critique* and *Prose Nouvelle*, the idea of the Party losing its influence and declining in both electoral and intellectual terms, purely because of its failure to appreciate the evolution of French and international society, especially between 1956 and 1976, is not to be taken seriously. "Le retard de 1956" is a gadget, not an argument. Is a pot of jam missing? Has a quarter of the Communist vote disappeared? "C'est le retard de 1956", they comment, with some asperity. François Hincker, a historian who teaches at Paris-1, and who was the political secretary of Roland Leroy and the director of *La Nouvelle Critique*, chooses a different historical perspective. "Le retard de 1956" is not to blame, he suggests, but rather the fact that the evolution of the Party between the 1960s and 1976 was not pursued with sufficient vigour, and that after 1976 it was blocked altogether. Thus, in February 1982, at the 24th Congress of the Party, the Communist Party, Georges Marchais claimed that for twenty years after 1956 (the date of the Khrushchev report and of the 14th Congress of the PCP) the Party was the prisoner of a socialist model which was adapted neither to France nor to the world. "Nous ne vivons ni dans la France des *années so*

group of uneasy Party members, he began by slowly reading out, word for word, the declarations of the Comité Central which had been published in *l'Humanité* and the text of which was in everyone's hand. "Vous avez fini de nous prendre pour des cons?" asked one of the audience. But the reading continued.

The obvious implication of these stories is that the Party leadership is in danger of isolating itself from the mass support which it requires, and even more in danger of taking wrong decisions or of being surprised by events. It is claimed that the leadership was warned of an explosive situation developing in Poland as early as 1976 but that the warning was disregarded and the journalist responsible recalled (although there is no reason to believe either that the Party leaders were ignorant of Polish difficulties or that the journalist in question had been able to foresee in some miraculous fashion how events would develop). Barak complains that "les permanents", the full-time Party workers, have little real experience of the working class and that they are separated, by their functions, from the realities of ordinary people, and Hincker believes that, for the first time, the Party is in danger of becoming an irrelevance, a mere obstacle which all other parties will be able to get round.

The most famous occasion when the PCF leadership was taken by surprise and unable to decide what to do occurred in 1956. In that year the Khrushchev report and the Soviet invasion of Hungary posed problems for Communists throughout the world, but the reactions of the French Party have never ceased to cause controversy. By this time Le Roy Ladurie was, according to his own account, ill at ease within the Party, "un étranger de l'intérieur", disconcerted by Khrushchev's visit to Tito, listening avidly to the depressing account of the Party in Provence given to him by his fellow-historian, Maurice Agulhon, or to the mockery of the hard-liners, the "albanophiles", as presented by his fellow-normalien, the philosopher Deprun. Yet he rejoiced at the Communist success in the 1956 elections; and while affected by the Khrushchev report (which was published by *Le Monde* in June 1956), he did not take any action until some five months later when he heard, on the morning bulletin, news of the Soviet intervention in Hungary. He then leapt to his Vélodrome and rushed to local headquarters where he handed in his card, which was carefully placed in a drawer. "Elle y est peut-être encore", he adds, as if to give an extra touch of melodrama to his new existence (which he likens to Panurge's quest for the truth). When Le Roy Ladurie suggests that Jean Bruhat, at one time the official historian of the Party and a specialist on the 1871 Commune, resembled one of the ecclesiastical dignitaries of the *ancien régime*, fulfilling his functions without believing in his religion, he doubtless depicts his own position over many months.

For Barak it is still important to know whether the Party leadership had seen the Khrushchev report even when they were protesting its authenticity (it infer the text had been published in *Le Monde*). It was customary for Communist officials to refer those who asked for copies to the American State Department since, it was said, it was this organization which held (the copyright). For Hincker what was essential was the fact that however reluctant the leadership had been to discuss the implications of de-Stalinization, in fact a lively debate was inaugurated by 1958, which was a prelude to the new atmosphere in the party developed under Waldeck-Rochet ("le parti bouge" as he puts it).

In the collective history, *Le PCF: étapes et problèmes 1920-1972*, which has something of an official stamp since it originated in a series of lectures given by the Institut de Recherches Marxistes, the section on 1956 is by Jean Martelli. He describes how the French delegation to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which they already appreciated was to be something of a turning-point, was shown a remarkable document that they were informed was secret. Martelli does not enter into a discussion of whether Maurice Thorez knew in advance that Stalin's crimes were likely to be denounced, or whether the revelation came as a total shock to him. However, he says, considerable



Commissioned by Aragon for Les Lettres Françaises on the occasion of Stalin's death in 1953, this interpretation of Stalin by Picasso caused immediate controversy in official PCF circles and among painters of the socialist-realist school. Aragon was obliged to publish letters in which he and Picasso were accused of "deviations". Maurice Thorez, who was undergoing medical treatment in Russia at the time, intervened in defence of the portrait.

stress on the fact that the circumstances of Khrushchev's communication could only inspire caution. Like Danielle Tartakowsky, he explains that there was uncertainty as to Khrushchev's authority within the presidium. Since Thorez (and his colleagues) had been closely associated with Stalin, it was hardly to be expected that they would leap into a denunciation of his mistakes and wickedness, even if they were prepared to believe all the allegations made against him. They were naturally fearful of the consequences which such hasty action would have had both for them and for the Party. Their position was further complicated by the fact that a Socialist, Guy Mollet, was prime minister and that they had been supporting his policy in Algeria which they believed might lead to peace.

There is reason to think that there was genuine anxiety among the Communist leadership that right-wing, militarist and "fascist" tendencies were on the increase in France. Hence a tendency to talk about the report "attribué au camarade Khrushchev" to suggest that Stalin was guilty of mistakes but not of crimes, and to concentrate upon the errors of the cult of personality rather than to accept the accusation (which was made by the Socialists as well as by the right) that the phenomenon of Stalinism was an inevitable part of a Communist system. It was in this situation that the Franco-British attack on Suez took place, there were disturbances in Poland and the Russians invaded Hungary. Crowds tried to attack the offices of *l'Humanité* in Paris and there were demands that the Communist Party should be made illegal. The result was that the Party re-assorted its support for Soviet Russia, condemned what had happened in the Hungarian Communist Party and chose to reaffirm its loyalty to its own leaders. The danger, he declared, was not Stalinism, but "counter-revolution, revisionism and false friends."

These historians, all of whom are (presumably) members of the PCF, state that it was natural enough, given the pressure of internal and external events, for the Party not to have proceeded further in its analysis of the situation, but they do not hesitate to describe as a failure ("un retard") the lack of any definition of long-term independent strategy at a time of agonizing reappraisal. They have surprisingly little to say about the silences and reticences of which the leadership was guilty, although it was precisely these which Marconis picked out when, at the end of 1974, he said

The line of duty

Peter Clarke

DENIS JUDD

Lord Reading: Rufus Isaacs, First Marquess of Reading, Lord Chief Justice and Viceroy of India, 1860-1935

316pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £15. 0 297 78014 X

"Man Who Rose from Ship's Boy to be Lord Chief Justice and Viceroy", ran the newspaper headlines when he died. Rufus Isaacs was created Lord Reading in 1913, his patron Lloyd George made him an earl in 1917, and on his return from India in 1926 he became a marquis. He was the first commoner since the Duke of Wellington to rise so high in dignity. Honorary Freeman of the City of London, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports - the only honour that eluded him was the Garter, for which, as a Jew, he was ineligible. Like a connoisseur, he had a keen feeling for this singular gap in his collection, apparently not aware that his origins for once were an impediment to his aspirations. While at the Embassy in Washington, he confided, "I have no great personal sympathy with Zionism. Why should I have? Here I am, Ambassador, Lord Chief Justice, Peer, and I started from nothing."

What did it all amount to? It was the shell of a great career, and when it was cracked open it was dry and empty. In public life, which he graced so long and so variously, Isaacs left almost no impression. He was elected as Liberal MP for Reading in the great landslide victory of 1906 but proved a parliamentary lightweight, as Denis Judd acknowledges in his new biography. It was his reputation as a barrister which earned Isaacs preferment, as Solicitor-General in March 1910, with a reversionary right to the post of Attorney-General, which fell vacant in October of the same year. As Attorney-General he likewise had a presumptive right to succeed the Lord Chief Justice. This was a highly specialized sort of advancement, to which party politics fuelled elevation to high legal offices for which few MPs were technically qualified.

The puzzle about Rufus Isaacs is in the first place a personal one. His rise was not, like Asquith's, the ostensibly effortless apotheosis of the scholarship boy. Isaacs never went to university; he was school at fourteen, was packed off to sea by his family, and spectacularly failed in business, all before he was twenty-five. But he need not have endured - or enjoyed - such a mixed start in life. His family background, as is customary in such tales, became retrospectively more impoverished the more Isaacs flourished - the fact that an uncle became Lord Mayor of London is indicative. Nor was he a child of the ghetto; neither socially nor spiritually did Judaism much encumber him. In his youth he was certainly a rebel: wild, impetuous, reckless. Starting on the Stock Exchange - he was only nineteen but he lied about his age - he enlarged his commitments to the extent that, when he was hammered in 1884, he left debts of £5,000. Mother then stepped in, and Rufus was firmly set at the foot of the legal ladder.

From this point onwards, the success story unfolded relentlessly. Hard work and steady habits became a way of life. He gave up champagne because it brought on bouts of faintness. He took the cure at Aix and later Marienbad, cultivating useful contacts and indulging in little flutters at the casino. His gambling instinct displaced to the margins of his life. He rose early and worked long hours to master his briefs. He was always immaculately prepared. Adroit and factual, he was the settlement man of the age when great advocates were lavishly rewarded; he became a wealthy man, earning £15,000 a year by 1902, £30,000 in 1910. He lived well but still left £290,000 at his death in 1935 - several million pounds in today's terms. And all the while, his brother Godfrey was doing very nicely with the Marconi

Marconi is the name that haunted Reading's public life, hard as he tried to blot out any mention of it after becoming Lord Chief Justice. For the Marconi scandal of 1912-13 threatened his whole work of rehabilitation. It was a little flutter which went disastrously sour, a stinging challenge to his probity, and an opening to anti-Semitic scorn which mocked him as Cebus. The conventions governing the financial transactions of members of the government were admittedly loose and ill-defined, but when Isaacs acquired shares in the American Marconi Company, gave some to Lloyd George and, when questions were raised about government contracts with the British Marconi Company, joined with Lloyd George in denying that they had bought shares in "that Company", he showed that his judgment was not so sound as his new friends had supposed. He had regressed to an earlier self. Marconis was found out. He had to stand up again in Parliament to explain the difference between that company and this company, a distinction which Members might not have noticed in his earlier statement and which singularly failed to impress them. But if the Attorney-General went, then the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have to go too. This is surely why Asquith stepped in to protect them both. With the Prime Minister behind them, they could bluff it out together.

Denis Judd puts forward an alternative view of the Prime Minister's motives, based on a subsequent (undated) letter to Reading from Asquith's widow. "He saved L.G. over Marconi. Why? because L.G. was young and he loved you. Had it been for you he would have let L.G. go." It is true that Reading remained almost uniquely, on cordial terms with both Asquith and Lloyd George a lifetime, and he had good reason to be grateful in each case. After the Marconi affair there was a hint of bond between him and Lloyd George, who continually gave Reading political errands which diverted him from his legal duties. During the war he was virtually an absentee Lord Chief Justice, an office for which he had little enthusiasm. Like many a brilliant barrister, he seems to have seen the main attraction of the bench as the prospect of a pension. Remarkably even after he ended his secondment as Ambassador to the United States, he received confidential despatches between London and Washington, presumably to relieve the tedium of the law courts.

When it fell to Lloyd George to appoint a new Viceroy of India in 1926, therefore, he was easily convinced of the suitability of his versatile friend. Reading's old servant, Denis Judd, announced her determination not to be left at home by declaring wanted to see India. "Her master seems to have been in a similar frame of mind. He had no deep knowledge of the subtleties of no strategic commitment to British nationalism, either for or against. Viceroy, Reading was treated like a royal. He worked hard on his boots. He dressed up in the line of duty, entertained in the line of duty, and shot tigers in the line of duty. It was no holiday, but he had never expected the palm without the dust. He kept Gandhi at bay for a time with his patience. To Judd, however, the Reading was widely popular in India, though it is not clear what criteria underpin this assessment. Reading certainly looked the part and he had no prejudices to prevent him from playing it with a good grace."

It was a resplendent climax to his magnificent career, but what mark it left upon history is more difficult to say. Indeed, it is rather a mystery how Reading today. This volume will be the last word on him, but only readers will find it serviceable and sufficient.

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JULIUS GOEBEL

The Struggle for the Falkland Islands: A Study in Legal and Diplomatic History

482pp. Yale University Press. £10 (paperback, £5.95). 0 300 02943 8

Three days after the Argentine surrender in Port Stanley, *Private Eye* reported the true story of Mr William Curtis of Mission, British Columbia, Canada. It appears that Mr Curtis, having become convinced of the inevitability of World War Three, sold all he owned and, with his wife and two children, flew in September 1981 to the Falkland Islands, believing them to be a safe refuge from the exigencies of world politics. Could anyone have been more wrong? Probably not, but a great many people, better informed and less nervous than Mr Curtis, have been shown to be no wiser than he.

This is quite understandable. It requires more knowledge and much less optimism than average to take seriously the possibility of war about remote rocks and bogs with a minuscule population declining in numbers. One can understand, even if one deplores, the Germans and the French having fought two bloody wars about Alsace and Lorraine, and it is not unreasonable on the part of the Soviet Government to be concerned about Poland. But the Falkland Islands? Who can possibly be so insane as to care about and fight about the Falkland Islands?

The answer is, roughly 25 million Argentines. In Buenos Aires in September, 1966, anyone walking in the Calle Florida could have purchased *Blanca*, the cover of which bore a photograph of two rather scrawny sheep in a desolate expanse of grass. Underneath was a caption in bold type: "The riches of which the imperialists have robbed us". Inside was yet another restatement of the Argentine case for the possession of "Las Malvinas", rhetorically embroidered with Marxist jargon about imperialism and the exploitation of the poor by the rich, and especially by the white British. The aim of the magazine was to provide advance publicity for a comic-opera invasion of the Falkland Islands by a party of Argentine youths in a commandeered aeroplane. Although many deplored the folly of the "invasion", few disagreed with its purpose.

Yale University Press has revealed a sharp commercial instinct in republishing what is described on the cover as "the only serious and detailed book ever published on the subject in English" and an essential reading for anyone who wants to know the background to the current crisis. "The Struggle for the Falkland Islands", published in 1927, hardly answers to Professor J. C. J. Metford, which first appeared in an article in *International Affairs* in July, 1968, does in considerable measure make good the publisher's claim that the volume as a whole is worth buying and reading.

Julius Goebel's book is a good example of American historical scholarship, between the two world wars well documented, based on a thorough examination of contemporary literature, learned in four languages, but intellectually naive and naive in its approach to the public law and diplomacy of the great powers of the world. The "discovery" of the Falkland Islands by the forces of the British Crown in 1833, Goebel arrived repeatedly violated the public law of Europe, from the papal bull *Inter Caetera* dividing the New World between the Crowns of Castile and Aragon and the Crown of Portugal. Britain, according to Goebel, claimed the Falkland Islands and settled there in defiance of the law of nations. Both the claim and the act were illegal and wrong.

Goebel concludes his study thus: "There is a certain futility in

A question of sovereignty

H. S. Ferns

interposing the lean and ascetic visage of the law in a situation which first and last is merely a question of power. Nevertheless, the present masters of the Falkland Islands (in 1926-27) have called upon the law to testify to the justice of their acts, and it is proper therefore, that what this law is should be fairly set forth and understood. This it has been sought to do... not with the anticipation that the facts narrated will necessarily alter the situation, or that a wrong will be righted, but because the law which states have so painstakingly wrought to govern their relations is too precious a heritage to be suborned to cover the imperialistic designs of any nation. Nicanor Costa Mendez could not improve on this.

Unfortunately Goebel's own book contradicts his conclusions. One principle of international law, *uti possidetis*, ie, that material possession determines the rights of sovereignty, the Spanish Crown was forced to admit in the Treaty of Münster (1648-49), but after experiences like the destruction of the Armada by the English, the rebellion of the Dutch and a few hard knocks by the French. If, as Goebel argues, *uti possidetis* is a principle of international law, in his view why did it not apply in 1927 to the case of the Falkland Islands? By then the British Crown had exercised sovereign authority over a British community in the Falkland Islands for ninety-four years, and the United States, as well as several Latin American states, had long acknowledged this sovereignty.

The world can, however, be grateful to Goebel for first putting on public record the part of agents of the United States in extinguishing Argentine authority in "Las Malvinas". In 1811 Spain abandoned its endeavours to sustain a community and to exercise authority in the Falkland Islands. From then until more than a decade after the establishment of the United Provinces of the Rio de la Plata (the first name of the Argentine Republic) there was no authority in the Falklands, although there was much activity, mainly by seal hunters and whalers who congregated in the islands to catch seals, take on fresh water, kill cattle for ships' stores and rest ships' crews. Many of those using the Falkland Islands in this way were citizens of the United States.

In 1829, the Government of the United Provinces of the Rio de la Plata appointed Luis Vernet, a business man, as Governor of the islands. The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen, instructed the British Consul-General in Buenos Aires to protest against this, and to assert the British claim to sovereignty. No attention was paid to this protest. Those who did actively oppose the exercise of Argentine sovereignty in the islands were American ships' captains and crews. Some agreed to pay Argentine licence fees for the privilege of fishing, sealing and hunting, but some refused on the grounds of their natural right to hunt, shoot and fish where they pleased. Those who did so were arrested.

The United States Consul in Buenos Aires accused the Argentine Governor of piracy. The USS *Lexington* was dispatched to the Falklands by the Consul. Commander Silas Duncan, USN, landed sailors from the *Lexington*, spiked the Argentine guns, blew up the powder magazine, clapped the Argentine officials in irons and sailed away to demand their trial as pirates. All this was very much in the spirit of the British buccannery of the seventeenth century in their dealings with the Spanish authorities, actions which Goebel so much deplored.

As a result of this robust example of frontier democracy on the high seas, US-Argentine diplomatic relations were broken off for eleven years and as late as 1885 the two governments were still discussing the matter. Goebel alleged that the United States Consul in Buenos Aires was put up to all this by the British. In fact the first Argentine Governor in the Falklands, being primarily interested in the islands as a business proposition, was in two minds about whether to seek Argentine or British authority for his plans, and he discussed his project fully with Woodbine Parish, the British

Consul-General in Buenos Aires. If the British Government had been a little quicker off the mark and acted to assert British sovereignty in, say, 1828, Vernet's colony might very well have been a British and not an Argentine one.

As it was, this Argentine colony was destroyed, but not by Britain. By the time the Admiralty got around to despatching Captain Onslow in HMS *Clio* to assert the sovereignty of King William IV in the Falkland Islands, the Argentines were attempting to establish a new penal colony there. The *Clio* arrived at the moment when the Argentine Governor and his naval commander were putting down a mutiny. Captain Onslow asked the Argentines to pull down their flag. They refused to do so, presented a written protest asserting that they were sailing away. No blood was shed, and until General Chacabuco took the stage 149 years later no Argentine life had been put their case clearly to the public, either in Argentina or elsewhere. How many people, for example, know that in 1947, 1951 and 1953 the British Government invited the Argentine Government to join with them in having the question of sovereignty in the Falklands adjudicated by the International Court of Justice, and that in 1955 they asked them to do the same in the matter of South Georgia, the Sandwich Islands and the British Antarctic Territory? In every instance the Argentine Government refused to let an impartial international body determine the justice of their case.


The plain fact is that the Argentine politicians do not want a settlement with Britain over the Falkland Islands any more than they want a settlement with Chile over the Beagle Channel. Anti-imperialist demagoguery and nationalism cant are too useful in domestic politics easily to be

From the 1840s until Perón came to power in 1946, the Falklands/Malvinas

problem was not very much alive, nor was it dead. The Argentines always refused to do anything which might be interpreted as evidence that they accepted British authority in the Falklands. The Argentine Post Office, for example, would not accept mail to or from the Falkland Islands. It was illegal to print, publish or sell a map of the Argentine Republic which omitted the words, "Islas Malvinas". All direct intercourse between Argentina and the islands was prohibited until the 1960s.

Perón did not discover the Falklands/Malvinas issue, but he gave it a new dimension. Under his guidance imperialism replaced the devil and all his works in popular demagoguery, and the Falkland Islands became the incarnation of the evil against which all Argentines were exhorted to fight. The British response to this development in popular Argentine politics has been civilized and conciliatory, but not very clever. Above all, the British have never put their case clearly to the public, either in Argentina or elsewhere. How many people, for example, know that in 1947, 1951 and 1953 the British Government invited the Argentine Government to join with them in having the question of sovereignty in the Falklands adjudicated by the International Court of Justice, and that in 1955 they asked them to do the same in the matter of South Georgia, the Sandwich Islands and the British Antarctic Territory? In every instance the Argentine Government refused to let an impartial international body determine the justice of their case.

Much of the responsibility for this decline into shabby populism rests with the armed forces. Perhaps the fact that they have been revealed as even worse soldiers than they are politicians and economic managers will destroy the myths upon which they feed. Mrs Thatcher may yet emerge as one of the great Argentine reformers, for she has demonstrated that the Emperor has no clothes.



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The rhetoric of revelation

Rachel Trickett

NORTHROP FRYE

The Great Code: The Bible and Literature
261pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£9.95.
0 7100 9038 2

Like *The Anatomy of Criticism* this is a wonderful book, and like that, at once illuminating and frustrating. Northrop Frye exposes his own technique by admitting in his Introduction that it is based on a series of courses delivered over the years to students at the University of Toronto, and on lectures he gave in various universities throughout North America. He explains the ironic Socratic method in which he believes good teaching to consist, and he draws attention to his own elusive position: uncommitted, devoted to the questioning of accepted orthodoxies or intellectual clichés, and set on driving his pupils outward and beyond the limitations of their own accepted wisdom. A peculiar mingling of exposition, generalization, specific scholarship, argument and brilliant *apocryph* gives this preliminary study of the Bible as, in Blake's phrase, "the Great Code of Art" a discrete and miscellaneous temper, in spite of the ingenious "double mirror" pattern Frye claims as accidental where the first four chapters – Language I, Myth I, Metaphor I and Typology I – are reflected backwards in the last four – Typology II, Metaphor II, Myth II and Language II. If accidental, this pattern fortuitously emphasizes the interconnections the author sees between external and internal designs; man's conscious constructions and his semi- or sub-conscious preoccupations. The book retains its miscellaneous character in spite, too, of the rapid, clear, and witty manner in which Frye pursues his argument – that accomplished polemical performance we have come to expect from the author of *The Anatomy of Criticism* which, sometimes seems, paradoxically, to belie the uncommitted stance he claims.

Frye can use the jargons of psychology, anthropology and structuralism as if they were a normal vocabulary, and his clear and simple expositions of the concepts underlying these dialects run so smoothly that he makes their use by the masters of the mysteries look like heavy-handling indeed. The frustration readers may well feel with this book is in one sense intended by the author. Frye is purposely flouting our preconceived formulations of literary structure, literary intention, linguistic reference, and the relation of fiction to fact, of art to life. In another way, though, there is a genuine frustration for readers presented with such novel, perceptive, sometimes profound observations, deftly produced, and then almost casually laid aside. Some central clue to *The Great Code* Frye consistently refuses to unravel; just as he insists that the Bible itself, "the little books", that anonymously edited miscellanea, has a unity of meaning, a self-referential quality, which is sufficient, and which we should not attempt to expand in such a way as to lead us to extraneous referents of belief, of history, or of nature.

But it can still seem that *The Great Code* is continually hindering or looking askance at no hinterland of wider thought, not necessarily deeper concern just as the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, proclaims a truth beyond the accidents of human history, the imposed order of the Law, the accents of prophecy – something at once "evermore about to be", and already here and now. Frye would, and does say, that the methods of approaching the Bible either through scholarship or through belief have proved themselves to be inadequate. They lead us so far and no further. His own way of following the pattern of "polyvalence" or "multi-levelled conception of meaning" in the Bible is more fruitful. He sees this work as he sees the body of literature – under all its apparent inconsistencies unified in an all-inclusive vision of human experience, of which its pattern of story, of images, of circumstance, of

archetype – its parallelism of style and of subject, its myth-making, primitive techniques of thought and language, are the microcosm or prototype. Where he resolutely refuses to go further – as in *The Anatomy of Criticism* he rejects value judgments – is in neglecting any attempt to realize this vision, or to affirm or deny its truth except as a human and literary activity.

In this he differs from the master of such explorations, Coleridge, who has influenced him so strongly. In his miscellaneous works on religion, Coleridge is forever relating the myths, the images, the prophecies, the doctrines of Scripture and the Fathers to his own experience, and to his own affirmative response to what the Bible proclaims. Frye ignores this dimension, claiming neither belief nor disbelief, but purporting to describe and enquire into the material itself – to let the work, existing in itself, speak for itself and by itself. It is a matter of personal judgment in the last resort whether this is the more fruitful, or even the appropriate way of dealing with what Frye calls "this huge, sprawling, tactless book".

How well, though, he describes and investigates! In describing he never shies away from the demands the Bible makes on any reader: "Clearly, the Bible is a violently partisan book; as with any other form of propaganda, what is true is what the writer thinks to be true; and the sense of urgency in the writing comes out much more freely for not being hampered by the clutter of what may actually have occurred." "The essential idiom of the Bible is clearly oratorical." He defines the linguistic idiom of the Bible as "kerygma, proclamation." "It is the vehicle of what I use because it is traditional and I can think of no better one." What a typical Northrop Frye sentence – and sentiment – this last! But in so far as he is concerned to summarize his description, Frye returns to his original preoccupation not so much with revelation as with myth as a form of truth-telling: "myth is the linguistic vehicle of *kerygma*, and... to 'demythologize' any part of the Bible would be the same thing as to obliterate it." (In a footnote he absolves Bultmann of any such intention.)

Perhaps the first chapter, "Language I", is the least successful, if only because it reads like too compressed an introduction to a densely complicated subject. It is consciously simplified. Taking over Jakobson's distinction between the metaphorical and the metonymic, Frye relates metaphorical language to an early period believing in "a plurality of gods"; the metonymic to a period developing the concept of a monotheistic "God" – the first being the language of immanence, the second of transcendence. This is asserted but not investigated. The association of certain periods with certain modes of language is arbitrary. The third "descriptive" mode which departs from the analogic or metonymic mode corresponds to the Renaissance and post-Renaissance eras, and the familiar seventeenth-century battle, between words and things which he neatly refers to by a well-chosen quotation from Cowley, celebrating Bacon. But he neglects to do more than speculate on the limits of descriptive language and its uncertain role after the nineteenth century.

The thought suggests itself that we may have completed a gigantic cycle of language, from Homer's time, where the word evokes the thing, to our own day, where the thing evokes the word, and are now about to go around the cycle again; as we seem now to be confronted once again with an energy contained in subject and object which can be expressed verbally only through some form of metaphor. The thought, it seems, has suggested itself on inadequate evidence, as an illusion of energy. There is, however, no proof in modern writing of any new metaphorical turn. The loss of the clarity of "descriptive" language looks rather to have been supplied by technological terminology and general

disturbance of language, including the rhetoric of metaphor.

This chapter, nevertheless, moves into a statement which, though not original, is firmly advanced as one of the basic contentions of the whole book: "It is the primary function of literature, more particularly of poetry, to keep re-creating the first or metaphorical phase of language during the domination of the later phases, to keep presenting it to us as a mode of language that we must never be allowed to underestimate, much less lose sight of."

This statement, together with the equation of myth with story, and the declaration that to demythologize the Bible would be to obliterate it, are the bases of Frye's approach. Yet he is especially and understandably anxious to dissociate himself from any partisan position. He chooses to quote from the Authorized Version "not because of the beauty of its cadences... conventional aesthetic canons of that sort I wanted to get rid of at the start". "I use their [the translators of the AV's] version because they were not trying to make a new translation but a traditional one. In other words, the AV is a translation centrally in the Vulgate tradition."

It is, nevertheless, hard to avoid the hint here of a value judgment, since the importance of tradition and continuity to Frye's whole critical method is essential. But he remains cautious and impartial on the contemporary dispute over biblical translations, pointing out equally where the AV is inaccurate or weak (especially when an intimate tone is required), and where it is strong – in its closeness to the spoken word: "appointed to be read in churches"; its mastery of the paratactic syntax of the Hebrew; its understanding of the imaginative nature of the original: "The simplicity of the Bible is not the simplicity of majesty, nor equality, much less of naïveté; its simplicity expresses the voice of Authority." Here lurks the argument against modern translations in which the simplicity of majesty and authority is sacrificed to the interests of accuracy and clarity. These versions have missed the essential nature of the book in

trying to divorce the issue of language from that of meaning. Though he takes no sides in the argument, Frye's position depends on the inextricable union of language and meaning. In a work of literature, the language is the meaning, and though the Bible claims to be more than a work of literature, it can never be less.

On his home ground of myth and metaphor Frye fears (in his Introduction) that these chapters will seem too reminiscent of *The Anatomy of Criticism*, but the material precludes this. He subtly examines the recurrent patterns in the Old and New Testaments, the use of type and anti-type, the fulfilment of the prophecies in the Gospels seen through repeated images and symbols, references forward and backward, predications and anticipations, realized and finally in Revelation, summarized and recapitulated – in Wordsworth's phrase, "brought within the power of vision". The material of his two chapters on Typology will be familiar to students of Medieval literature, but they are drawn into the context of Frye's whole argument with a new and powerful effect of climax. The critic who first pointed out Ruskin's sympathetic genius for this kind of mythopoetic and typological thinking, finds in it his own most congenial mode of looking at literature and at human experience, though he is careful to limit his understanding of the latter to his method of approaching the former.

Yet some of the most wise and striking insights Frye has to offer are, ultimately, about human experience. No one can write about the Bible – or about any true literature – without being moved to speculate on human life and human imagining. There are few critics today who, like Frye, for all the superiority to the Bible itself, bear on himself, can touch so unflinchingly on the deepest concerns of the heart and the imagination. In the chapter "Metaphor I" he speculates on the idea of the resurrection and its transcending of our normal ideas of time and space, and then comments on the inadequacy of our conception of eternity:

We sometimes try to arrive at the conception of "eternity" by simply subtracting the essence of time,

which is movement and change, from time. . . . In this construct the eternal is described as a state of continuous peace, rest and repose. One can understand the appeal of such metaphors after seventy years or so of human behaviour, but after all they are metaphors drawn from death and seem hardly definitive for a conception of something genuinely beyond life.

Later, in "Typology II", Frye comments on the idea of "beginning" the first word of the Bible – and questions our associations of beginning with birth. "It is rather the moment of waking from sleep, when the world disappears and another comes into being." This sense, common in varying degrees to the poetic imagination, materializes in our world today in the revolutionary urge Frye notes as the second phase in his list – Creation, Revolution, Law, Wisdom, Prophecy, Gospel, Apocalypse – as the order of the creative thought lying behind the Bible's metaphorical structure. It is, however, the last – Apocalypse – that restores the tree and the water of life lost in Genesis, and that also forces the reader through into a second life: "Behold, I make all things new." This new world is, nevertheless, recalled in terms of the old. Frye concludes this chapter:

We suggested earlier that the Bible deliberately blocks off the sense of the referential from itself; it is not a book pointing to a historical presence outside itself, but a book that identifies itself with that presence. At the end the reader, also, is invited to identify himself with the book. Milton suggests that the ultimate authority in the Christian religion is what he calls the Word of God in the heart which is superior to the Bible itself, because for Milton this "heart" belongs not to the subjective reader but to the Holy Spirit. That is, the reader completes the visionary operation of the Bible by throwing out the subjective fallacy along with the objective one. The apocalypse is the way the world looks after the epoch has disappeared.

So the Bible has the autonomy of myth or story, and the power, as of the greatest literature (Frye does not say here), to change from itself into "an aspect of our own imaginative lives", proving that the construction of a book or work of art, "in itself a manifestation of human finiteness" can "at some point be transcended".

The sense of the apocalypse which Frye first found and loved in Blake, and which has, through his influence, changed the taste and thinking of generations of students and critics, is the past three decades, points to more than the popular revolutionary fervour of the religion of Marx which adumbrates the old. It speaks of the transcending power of the imagination which has no perfect analogy in the created world. An artist once confessed to me his horror of Donne's prayer for a heaven where there would be "No dazzling nor darkness, but one equal light" – a sort of perpetual fluorescent illumination, he felt, an image of death. But, as Frye indicates, Milton's vision is nearer to his biblical source, as is Blake's. And even nearer to our own experience is Wordsworth's vision of an apocalyptic dimension in the description in "The Prelude" of crossing the Alps "of first, and last, and midst and without end" – which he recollected in *The Excursion* as the perception of "central peace" subsisting at the heart of existence.

This sense of visionary power, attendant on movement, change and renewal is the clue to Northrop Frye's witty and imaginative exploration of the recurrent patterns of human perception and experience. His ability to move confidently and unassumingly through the maze of so many disciplines, so much accumulated knowledge, such varied terminology without losing the central thread of his argument, is surely in the forefront of modern criticism. He promises a second volume on the same subject; we can only hope for it impatiently.

Wild Garden

My Preface to Your Unfashionable Collected Poems

Entering your wild Gothic at this high gate,
Where entry's gratis and plan and guide to
A strange nomenclature come free, no need that I

Should doubt which way to go. Once past this
Natural arch I choose this way below
Thick leaves where hiding birds sing loud –

This path dipping to springs which spread and vein
Sparse moss on slatted limestone, and drip and drip;
From clefts; here, poised in wet air blue petals

Of hepatics fringing their white-stitched
Circle-centres of an acidic green,
Over smooth lobes of kidney-leaves in threes.

You are – order in wilderness, I say;
Purpose in wildness, then surprise. You are
Stack and spike. You are self, cave, depth, twist, cool;

Auricular hollow, obstacle, light;
Black, grey, secret and absolution; and
Solution, as if this pine, as Chinese

Among rocks drew a single pine. Newly
I am compelled to your sky-height, again
Your utmost: up in air; to balance there

By ruin and masonry of low alpen-
Rose, where billberries too mat that hard long
Rib of rock – across grand hollows to

Stare, to stare and stare at proper art-struck small
Dead volcanoes, acting eternally
In those hepatics' same sweet sharp blue.

Geoffrey Grigson

For the greatest general good

R. B. Brandt

R. M. HARE

Moral Thinking
Its Levels, Methods, and Point
242pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £11 (pbk, £3.95).
0 19 824639 5

Moral Thinking is a comprehensive treatise which builds on ideas to be found in R. M. Hare's well-known earlier books and recent articles, and develops them further. It is clearly and forcefully written, although somewhat technical at points; but the main argument should be intelligible to the education public.

The book can be viewed as a utilitarian reply to John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, and is perhaps the most substantial formulation of utilitarianism since Henry Sidgwick. It defends "act-utilitarianism", the view that what a person morally ought to do is what will maximize the well-being – indeed, the happiness – of sentient beings, but adds that an act-utilitarian will teach a morality of principles (eg, "There is an obligation to keep one's promises") as the likeliest means of getting happiness-maximizing acts performed. The book is also a refreshing protest against certain trends in contemporary moral philosophy: it repudiates identifying correct moral principles by appeal to "intuitions", and it is systematic in connecting theory of justification in ethics with identifying substantive moral principles.

An exciting feature of the book is its attempt – unlike virtually all utilitarian writing since Mill – to produce a compelling argument for act-utilitarianism, employing as a premise only an account of the meaning of ordinary moral concepts. If Hare is really successful in this, the achievement is of the first importance. He begins with his well-known thesis about what is the moral sense of "ought". This thesis is that "You ought to do A" strongly prescribes doing A, or more simply, expresses (does not state) a strong desire that A be done. "Ought" also commits one to unalterability, in the sense that if I say you ought to do A, I implicitly affirm that everyone ought to do A in identical circumstances (ie, the same space-time and the individuals involved). Putting these features together, Hare argues that "You ought to do A" may be explained as meaning "I hereby strongly prescribe, as expressing my strong sincere wish, that everyone do A in any situation like yours in abstract properties."

Is this account plausible? First, one might think that the unalterability part is not a matter of what we mean but of a firmly held moral belief. As to plausibility, if his account is correct

"You ought morally to enlist in the army, but I hope you won't" would be some kind of contradiction; but it seems not to be. More generally, a "liberated" man might strongly wish to have an adulterous relation with a woman whose husband does not much mind (and incidentally be glad if men similarly placed do likewise); he might, however, think that morally he ought not. If the reader is unconvinced by Hare's thesis here, his argument by moral principles does not get off the ground. Some philosophers take issue with Hare's basic strategy, since they think that the sense of moral words is used in so nebulous that one should give up trying to give some correct account of it and rather seek to identify some meaning it would be useful for these terms to bear, given the role of morality in society, and the function of moral words in moral discourse. One might urge, on this basis, that "You ought to do A" is usefully understood as, "Your doing A in circumstances like these would be required by the kind of conscience every fully informed and rational person would want prevalent in a society in which he expected to live." Even so, however, it is interesting to know whether Hare can show that his account, if correct, permits a compelling argument to substantive moral principles.

Hare thinks that his definition of the moral "ought" leads directly to a kind of Golden Rule principle. But more exactly, it leads to the principle, "You ought to treat someone in a certain way if and only if you would favour both (1) doing it yourself and also (2) the same thing being done for the case in which you are the patient of the act." For example, I ask, "Ought I to push my neighbour in order to be first on the train?" Hare's view is, roughly, that it is correct to say "I ought to push" if and only if, overall, I prefer pushing and being pushed to neither of us pushing. Why does Hare's account of "ought" lead to this result? It is because "I ought to do A" means, roughly, "I hereby strongly prescribe that everyone do A in any situation like mine in abstract properties", and my being pushed by someone else is exactly the same as my pushing him, in abstract properties (ie, the identities of the persons are changed). Further, the situation is not the same unless I, when in the position of the one being pushed, have just the same preferences (likes and dislikes) as the person I am considering pushing. (If my neighbour is a mild man who doesn't much care about being pushed, then "I ought to push A" is morally in the clear.)

Hare's account of the meaning of "ought", then, does seem to lead to a version of the Golden Rule. Moreover, unlike the Golden Rule principle, it can be extended to many-person cases. Suppose I wonder if I ought to do something which will have an impact on X, Y, and Z. In that case I can

properly say I ought to do this (as Hare construes "ought") if and only if I not only want to do this myself, but also me, in the same circumstances, were I in the situation of X (with X's likes and dislikes) and also to me were I Y, and were I Z. I am claiming to favour all these things if I say "I ought to do X". It follows that I ought to do the thing only if the sum of the preferences of myself, X, Y, and Z with respect to that being done comes out positive. (The preferences are not just to be counted; they are also to be weighed for intensity.) The result is a kind of preference-act-utilitarianism: an act ought to be performed if and only if the sum of the preferences of the persons involved is favourable. Hare calls this done, "critical thinking". It relies on the meaning of "ought" and the preferences of the individuals involved.

He adds two refinements to this line of reasoning. The first recognizes the general belief that moral judgments are not sound if they depend on mistaken factual beliefs. So Hare stipulates that the preferences about something being done, by anyone affected, be those preferences founded on a correct view of the effects of doing A. The second refinement involves the elimination of "external" preferences. Suppose a man wears his hat at the dinner-table; others object, not because it is an uncomfortable impact on them (eg, makes them nauseous), but just because they prefer that men not wear hats at the dinner-table. People have similar preferences about how others wear their hair, decorate their homes, conduct their personal lives. Hare proposes to eliminate such external preferences from the calculation about whether an act ought to be performed. More exactly, he proposes (albeit reluctantly) to limit the preferences that agents' actions will normally maximize utility, on the basis of the experiences which the act will have about in him in the circumstances. Any use of the term "happy", my prudent preference will therefore favour something being done if and only if it is going to make me happier than not. The upshot of the refinements is that a person ought to do something if and only if its effect is to maximize happiness among all concerned. This sounds like traditional hedonistic act-utilitarianism; whether it is depends on whether one defines "pleasure" as, roughly, a preferred state of consciousness. Hare's reasons for this second move are too complex to state here. (The above argument, incidentally, as he points out, compelling only for acts which affect others – perhaps not a large gap.)

There is now a surprise. Hare does not think we ought to direct our lives, mostly, by the principle "One ought to maximize happiness". For usually we do not have time to find which action this principle requires; we are also apt not to have the relevant information; and so on. He proposes that the rational act-utilitarian will teach himself, and his children, general moral commitments acceptance of which will normally, but not the act-utilitarian principle requires. Moreover, he will instill these principles (more sophisticated versions of "keep your promises", etc) so that the pupil will become strongly averse to infringing them, will feel strong compunction if he does, and will be highly indignant at others who do. The rational act-utilitarian will want us normally to resolve moral problems on the basis of these principles. When we do, Hare calls this "intuitive" thinking in morals. Ideally, our actual consciences will incorporate such intuitively-justified principles. But not always. So we need to be on the alert to review our moral commitments, to be sure they are the ones which will normally lead to utility-maximizing acts (the ones we ought to perform). Moreover, these principles can conflict; sometimes we must break a promise to avoid injuring another. When they do, Hare thinks we must revert to "critical" thinking to decide what is the right thing to do. Again, since "intuitive" principles must be specific in order to be simple enough to be learned, sometimes, in unusual situations, they do not do their job very well and do not lead to maximizing utility; when this is known to be the case, Hare thinks "critical" utilitarian thinking again should be relied upon.

He seems right in thinking that one who wants moral commitments to maximize the general well-being will inculcate "intuitive" principles in other persons. (He need not choose these, however, just so as to bring it about that agents' actions will normally maximize utility; he may choose them, more broadly, on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis of a society's moral system as a whole, just as one might assess a whole system of criminal justice by a cost-benefit analysis.) Hare also seems clearly right that the principles a person aiming to maximize welfare will teach are not necessarily those of actual morality, so that common-sense moral principles may need review.

Some features of this view about "intuitive" morality, however, are not so convincing. First, Hare thinks his theory shows how to undercut standard criticisms of act-utilitarianism on the grounds of directness to immoral action (eg, "Execute an innocent man if necessary to prevent mob violence.") He thinks that act-utilitarianism leads only to

apparently immoral actions; for while it may conflict with utility-justified "intuitive" principles, these are only devices for producing, normally, utility-maximizing acts, and hence are not chosen to cater to very unusual proposed by critics simply reflect these defects of "intuitive" principles. But it is not clear that all the examples can be waved aside so easily. Suppose there is a strike; the strike will be successful if most workers participate, but all workers will benefit if the strike is successful. (This situation is the typical of many problems: whether to fight in the army, pay one's taxes, vote when it is inconvenient.) Suppose a worker, grasping the situation, and seeing that enough workers will strike so that the effort will be successful, elects not to strike; a selfish, knowing that he will lose none of the benefits. The act-utilitarian principle says he ought to do this, a judgment which seems at best dubious. Now, when Hare sees such an objection aside, he seems to be simply assuming he has established act-utilitarianism, and the "intuitive" principles have moral force only as tending to produce utility-maximizing acts.

Another apparent consequence of his view of the status of "intuitive" principles is that, although the right to fair trial procedures is justified by its long-range utility, it may morally be infringed whenever so doing will clearly be marginally socially beneficial. This conception appears in conflict with our conception of a moral right; a moral right may not be infringed for such a reason. There are other possible strategies for this situation: for instance, say a person is justified in infringing an "intuitive" principle only if he sees that the principle itself ought to be modified in a definite way on utilitarian grounds, or at least only if he has thought hard about this and is convinced the principle ought to be modified even if he cannot see exactly how, at present. Hare himself agrees that we should be quite reluctant to forsake "intuitive" principles, and doubts that it is all a long story; but it does look as if some modification is called for at this point.

The Limits of Utilitarianism, edited by Harlan B. Miller, and William H. Williams (315pp; University of Minnesota Press, \$25.00. Paperback, \$10.95, 0 8166 1044 4) contains sixteen essays, all but one of which arose from a Conference held in Virginia in 1978. The articles are divided into four sections: "The Principles of Utility", "Utilitarianism and Contractarianism", "Welfare", and "Utilitarianism and the Moral Community". Contributors include David Lyons, Richard B. Brandt, David Gauthier and Jan Narveson.

States and statements

P. F. Strawson

Meaning and Modality
222pp. Cambridge University Press.
£22.50, £9.95 pbk

Strawson takes as fundamental to the general theory of meaning the notion of propositional content, ie, the content of such propositional attitudes as belief, desire and intention. This wayward, at first, like a conservative approach, with its commitment to propositions, worked out in naturalist, quasi-physicalist terms. Intensions (beliefs etc) as functional states, individuated by their causal relations, and realized neurophysiologically. The connection with naturalist states with sentences in a quasi-physicalist language for which a type-token theory is taken to be. There is no assumption, and

equally no denial, that the underlying states in question themselves exhibit linguistic structure, ie, that there is such a thing as a "linguistic of thought". Whether this is or not is a matter for empirical enquiry.

What of the theory of semantic concepts for a public language? With his account of propositional content and propositional attitudes in hand, Strawson is well placed to defend a Gricean theory of communication intention; as he does in his concluding chapter. The semantic properties of utterance-types are explicable by way of conventional regularities which associate utterance-types with types of communication intention. The standard charges of circularity and implausibility which are levelled against such a theory are deftly countered by Strawson; and, of course, the theory is in no way incompatible with the overwhelmingly reasonable assumption that language learning is an empirically necessary condition of holding complex propositional attitudes.

The concepts with which Strawson deals in *Meaning and Modality* – belief, desire, intention, truth, statement, language, not for the amateur or layman.

meaning – are part of the stock-in-trade of ordinary nontechnical thought. They are commonsense concepts. But the terms in which they are explicates them are very different. They are largely theoretical, technical terms belonging to the formal and scientific vocabularies characteristic of certain varieties (predominantly American) of post-war philosophy. But Strawson is, at least in intention, offering us a "rational reconstruction" in Carnap's sense. He insists on the conservative character of his explanation, on its character as a vindication of commonsense concepts "in terms of a theoretical structure which is not itself part of commonsense". He does not discuss, though his last chapter, in part illustrates, the yet more conservative option of elucidating the connections of the commonsense concepts *inter se* without recourse to the technicalities invoked in his theoretical construction.

Crisply written, sophisticated in treatment and thorough in argument, the book is a truly professional contribution to current debate. It will evoke a professional response; but it is not for the amateur or layman.

KALILA AND DIMNA

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Getting joined together

Rosalind Mitchison

R. B. OUTHWAITE (Editor)

Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage.
284pp. Europa. £19.50.
0 905118 62 6

SAR R. LEVITAN and RICHARD S. BELOUS

What's Happening to the American Family?

206pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. £11.50 (paperback, £4).
0 8018 2690 X

These two books prove that the history of the family and the history of marriage have become topics in their own right, worthy of serious comparative study. R. B. Outhwaite has already made a significant contribution in an article of 1973 on changes in the age of marriage in England. Now his introduction to *Marriage and Society* points out the importance of some of the themes of his contributors, and discusses the generalizations of Lawrence Stone, which were based on Stone's deep knowledge of the English aristocracy and higher bourgeoisie and his lack of acquaintance with the lives of lesser people. Outhwaite gives a range of statements by Stone which, as he says, "cry out for further research", a polite way of saying that they contradict the limited knowledge as yet available. The themes developed in this book also show that we are not yet ready to assess the thesis of Edward Shorter concerning the absence of affection within families before the nineteenth century. They are concerned with more basic issues, and in particular with the social progress of clarity as to what constituted a valid marriage.

The problems of the formal development of marriage law, as traced here by Christopher Brooke and Martin Ingram, seem to have sprung from the difficulty of combining the views of two powerful and overlapping sections of society: landowners, who used marriage as a means of building up or securing estates, and the Church, which insisted that there could be no true marriage without the consent of the couple. Professor Brooke shows how the Church's insistence that a valid marriage was permanent reinforced its definition, leaving annulment, usually

on grounds of consanguinity or affinity, as the main mechanism of escape from a marriage which failed to produce the desired heir. The Church, while clarifying concepts, also added its own touches of confusion: affinity could have wide bounds, and in a similar way bigamy involved much more than simply having two wives at the same time.

Ingram goes on to show the cumulative pressures both for marriage to take place in church, and on the part of couples, for it to be clandestine or irregular. This latter theme is taken up by R. L. Brown, who explores the growing popularity of Fleet marriages (destroyed eventually in 1753 by the determination of landed society to prevent unsuitable matches), and by T. C. Smout, who shows that irregular marriage continued in Scotland, where the Church was better able to hold its own against the property interest. Lloyd Bonfield shows the types of reasoning which led to the system of strict marriage settlement during the seventeenth century, and in particular that such settlements were adopted by men who had no father living, in which cases it must have seemed advantageous to the couple themselves. It was valued because of the security it gave to widows. Dr Bonfield also undermines an argument which had had some currency, that strict settlements were a major factor in the increasing strength and security of great estates at the expense of lesser landholders. Professor Smout's paper on Scottish marriage shows that the Kirk accepted a considerable role for parents in the choice of spouses for their children, but still insisted that marriage was not to be seen purely as a worldly bargain. Marriage in Scotland was a community event, and the robustness of some of the ways of celebrating it was one reason why some couples preferred irregular and private marriages.

Other interesting topics are raised in these essays. Kathleen Davies analyses the assumptions underlying the advice given on marriage, particularly by Puritan divines, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Puritans took it as part of the divine order that women should be subservient to their husbands, and when this principle came into conflict with the supremacy of conscience, conscience had to give way. Dr Davies goes on to argue - but on evidence hardly strong enough for it to be more than a hypothesis - that the puritan handbooks are "a collection of descriptive, rather than prescriptive texts", written by authors who were not advancing new ideals of marriage but were describing the best form of bourgeois marriage as they knew it. Perhaps in that sentence the word "best" should have been in inverted commas.

Vivien Elliott describes the London marriage market in the early seventeenth century, bringing out the advantageous position of the locally born woman, who could hope to marry some five or six years younger than could immigrants. Natives had the advantage of fathers who could negotiate terms, and give dowries; the migrants had probably come to London as servants with little support from outside. Owen Hutton's examination of the prospects of servant girls in eighteenth-century France, and their difficulties in building up dowries, is one of the most moving recent studies in social history. Everything from low wages to tuberculosis was against them, but some of these girls, after twelve years of wandering and working, just made it into the ranks of the wives of smallholders, where a renewed prospect of hard work lay ahead, though perhaps with some enhancement of status.

Two of the essays in *Marriage and Society* are of wide significance. L. A. Clarkson brings up to date our knowledge of Irish marriage and marital fertility, showing that at last we are getting away from what has been called "the swilling hazards" of eighteenth-century population estimates. E. A. Wrigley, in a long paper on eighteenth-century England, summarizes the main conclusions of the Cambridge Group on Population Growth and the Future of the World, and draws valuable conclusions from the eighteenth-century English experience. These mortality changes, similar to those found elsewhere, infectious disease is no respecter of frontiers, and the

development of the modern market economy had wide, if variously dated, ramifications. It is the fertility and marriage changes, from 1750 onwards, which conspicuously mark off English population history from, say, French. Wrigley concludes with a sentence which must be taken to heart by all involved in demographic history: "the west European marriage pattern... is better described as a repertoire of available systems than as a pattern." This being so, what we need is either more directly comparative studies or the raising in one country or another of issues suggested by evidence from elsewhere. How far down the social scale in early modern Britain did the system of dowries go? Was the conscious selection of elderly wives with probably low fertility to be found here as well as in nineteenth-century Scandinavia, and if so, when? Did household size in Ireland lie within the norms of western Europe or was it, as has sometimes been asserted (hence some of those "swilling hazards") much larger? These are just a few of the possible themes for study.

One paper brings in the United States, that in which Professors Glazer and Slater discuss the rambling scenes of two American women who married marriage with a medical career. Their stories show an intellectual muddle in the masculine world of professional medicine similar to that revealed by Kathleen Davies among Puritan divines. Of course men wished to promote good medicine, but somehow this had to be done by keeping down the number of able female practitioners. This view was expressed at its most extreme by a male doctor who opposed public health reform, in which women were often employed, in these terms: "if you are going to save the lives of all these young women and children at public expense, what inducement will there be for young men to study medicine?" Rarely has this moral unscrupulousness of discrimination been so crudely displayed.

Sar A. Levitan and Richard S. Belous's book shows the recent changes in rates of fertility and divorce, and the rising trend of married women returning to the labour market, apply much the same to the US as to Europe, though the exact figures and dates of changes may vary. It is a pity that the authors make only limited use of European comparisons and that they are short on facts about the historical dimension. It is unexpected to find that the end of the part - being resurrected, and a pity that the end of English post-law history should allow the remark that before Lloyd George the options were work, starve, or turn to one's family for support.



The historiated woodcut initial and opening lines of *Le Livre de Mathieus- Qui vous montre sans varier Les biens et aussi les vertus Qui viennent pour soy marier Et a tous faulx considerer Il dit que l'homme nest pas sage Sy se tourne remarquer Quant prinz a este au passage - a book of verse of sixty-eight leaves, with thirty-five illustrations (some repeated), printed probably in 1497 by Claude Dayne of Lyon, a copy of which, bound in red morocco by Trautz-Bauzonnell, was sold by Christie's Amsterdam on June 18.*

The sensible tone of this book, and its recognition that present-day statistics need to be seen in a historical context, should do much to calm contemporary observers of the divorce rate. It gives us reason to conclude that the rise in divorce is leveling off. The trouble with a crude "divorce rate" as a measure is that, like a crude death rate, it does not mean very much. It needs to be standardized, by either the length of marriage or the age of spouses, if we are to bring out what is really happening. Another statistical handicap is the fact that race-based statistics are unpopular today, and yet marriage figures for the United States

seem to be a combination of two statistically different patterns. We badly need work which would carry on Eugene Genovese's picture of slave society to trace the development of the black family in the twentieth century. These two books show how much generalizations about the past as well as about the present must be founded on statistics. It is only after this foundation work has been done that we shall be able to assess such matters as the role of affection in family life in early modern Europe, the place of women in society, or the emotional ocean in which children were, or were not, reared.

Getting put asunder

Rosemary Dinneen

A. ALVAREZ

Life After Marriage: Scenes from Divorce.
268pp. Macmillan. £8.95.
0 333 24163 4

One of the women's magazines, years ago, used to run a feature called "Can This Marriage Be Saved?" in which a wife (or husband) would relate to the editor, suffering at the hands of the spouse which won one's entire sympathy, followed by an "equally doting" narrative from the spouse, which instantly switched the reader's allegiance. The article would end with some "give-a-little-take-a-little" advice from the marriage expert, and it all made excellent and thought-provoking reading. About half of A. Alvarez's new book, which seems to do for divorce what his earlier book *The Savage God* did for suicide, consists of similar vignettes of failed and falling marriages, but the standard is not as high as it was in the *Lady's Home Companion*. It was easy to believe in the "muddled" American housewives featured there, but I never quite believed in Alvarez's glacial Swedish divorcees, or Jewish patriarchs who named the kids but not the wives, or languid young novelists enjoying a

marriage blanc - though no doubt they exist. I didn't quite believe in the dialogue: "The bar of matrimony drops and you are no longer at liberty to associate with anyone" or the accuracy of the observations ("sniffing the heavy smell unhappy people exude while they sleep"). Fictionalizing real people and real talk so elegantly that their realism is actually intensified (as done, for instance, by Ronald Blythe or Jonathan Raban) is a very special art.

The fact is, as Alvarez disarmingly admits in his preface, divorce turns out to be nothing like as good a subject as suicide. Suicide is one of the remaining secret, taboo, taboos: people think about it, and think about it with feeling, but are shushed up if they try to talk about it. Marriage, for all subject and everyone from Pope John Paul to E. A. Tamm has plenty to say. Though it can be as tragic as suicide, or even lead to it, divorce is inextricably entangled with the sordid (nagging, money squabbles) and the comic (mother-in-law, custody of the baby).

Alvarez's own grandmother-in-law - no less a person than Frieda Lawrence - provides the book's most interesting material: her self-image as "woman of the future", her debt to the psychoanalyst Otto Gross, her open

life-histories of the children she had to leave when she went off with him. Alvarez links the Lawrence's story with the account of his own first marriage and divorce (which forms one chapter, as did his suicide attempt in *The Savage God*), but in a curiously vague way. Somehow it appears that because P. R. Leavis said Lawrence was a good writer, A. Alvarez had a bad marriage. Marrying happily "seemed to be the thing to do in the fifties, particularly for a young literary man who had read too much Lawrence and Leavis"; it always has been, more or less; and twenty-seven does not seem a particularly early age to have felt "this terrible lust for premature maturity, this irresponsible desire for responsibility".

Indeed, the account of the marriage, though related in a post and fraught manner, is obscure: what was the beautiful granddaughter, of Frieda actually like, apart from having brown hair and wide green eyes that seemed to contain endless depths of feeling? What was it that they quarrelled about all the time? If the two of them, as he says, were acting out family dramas from their childhoods, what were those dramas? If you spill the beans about your private life, they must be inevitably and interestingly spilled. Fifty years of varied and varied fiction are not a substitute.

GORDON MARSHALL

In Search of the Spirit of Capitalism: An Essay on Max Weber's Protestant Ethic Thesis

236pp. Hutchinson. £12.
0 09 145650 9

FRANK PARKIN

Max Weber
123pp. Ellis Horwood/Tavistock.
£2.95.
0 85312393 4

The Max Weber industry is one of the few evidently unaffected by recession. The business of re-telling the story of Puritan "this-worldly asceticism" forcing the faithful into the rational pursuit of profit out of uncertainty about God's grace, goes on as usual. One would not expect otherwise. Every year a new generation of social scientists is successfully initiated into the intricacies of "understanding sociology" through a re-thinking of Weber's thesis, while their teachers grow tired and dispirited at repeating ageing arguments. Besides, the "protestant ethic" debate, now nearly eighty years old, has long reached the stage when the sheer volume of facts and views has produced makes it no less moot and bottomless than the subject-matter it purports to clarify. The debate itself calls for guides, summaries, bibliographies. Indeed, we are now at the stage of summaries of summaries: what we need is a meaningful interpretation of the bewildering diversity of interpretations.

More importantly, there are sound reasons why interest in Weber's version of the origins of capitalism should not falter. In a world split by the deep East-West and North-South divides, the factors responsible for the growth of wealth or lack of it provide a natural focus for scholarly as well as political attention. At least subconsciously, many people must wish Weber's account of such factors to be true; Weber's numerous protestations notwithstanding, his account was received by the public mind as a gentle and benign version of the drama of modernity (quite unlike the cruel and gut-rotting pictures painted by, say, Marx or Freud): as a charming story of missionary zeal and human

educability, rather than avarice and coercion; as the tale of a battle between emancipating reason and stultifying tradition, rather than between ruthless profit-seeking and their victims. Moreover, Weber's interpretation of the origins of capitalism (or, for that matter, of the age of economic growth as such) puts into the limelight exactly the kind of people who believe that they make history and expect to be written into it: thinkers and entrepreneurs, men of ideas and men of initiative. If others appear in the picture at all, they do so only as the objects of, or obstacles to, history-making. Finally, the heroes of the story cannot but feel flattered by the motives which Weber imputed to their actions: a religiously-inspired moral urge to hard work, rewarded with growing wealth. This is in tune with Nassau W. Senior's interpretation of profit as "remuneration of abstinence", and much more palatable than the cynical desire for wealth, for the latter, though an individual obsession while for the former it is merely the pressure of a social system in which he himself is only a cog. Since the capitalist must multiply his capital or perish, even his private consumption seems like a theft.

Thus in one way or another, the debate around Weber's thesis goes on and on. Only for the reasons spelled out above, it is unlikely to lose any of its informed and tightly argued "progress" report is not at all flattering about its achievements to date. His final verdict is that "the masterly argument of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* has but sporadically been matched in quality during the course of the debate occasioned by this text".

Marshall gives a number of reasons for the failure. One of these, to the effect that many of Weber's own comments and rejoinders remain untranslated, is to be dismissed (first, most of Weber's interpreters have been able to

Ascetics of the market-place

Zygmunt Bauman

read German, and second, Marshall has hardly used any of the untranslated texts to support his own argument). Another, that among participants in the debate, the historians have neglected theory while the sociologists have neglected history, is, I am willing to accept on the grounds, alas, that there is ample evidence for it. The most serious reason, however, seems to be one which Marshall subjects to a particularly thorough and cogent examination: that there is an essential confusion in the very idea of the "spirit of capitalism", for which Weber himself bears no small responsibility.

What, after all, did this "spirit of capitalism" mean to Weber? Was it an attribute, a condition *sine qua non* of capitalism, or its historic cause? And if there are any sound empirical ways to discover the content or the message of this "spirit", given E. P. Thompson's comment that "one cannot interview tombstones"? Or did the whole concept involve a circularity (with agents' motives being deduced solely from their actions, and hence invalid as explanations of them)? Marshall has convincingly articulated very clearly the motives imputed to the actors in the drama Weber was analysing and the concepts employed to articulate the world of the analysts. As to Calvin, Baxter, the Puritan saints and all the other unwitting religious promoters of the rational and secular world, they were examples of one of the most felicitous of Weber's categories of agent - that of the "vanishing mediator" (the name coined by Fredric Jameson, whose seminal study is not, unfortunately, among Marshall's sources): their very success in promoting a certain kind of conduct made them redundant. The religious prophets of rationality worked themselves out of a job.

Marshall raises one profound criticism against Weber's thesis, but, regrettably he allows it only a marginal place and does not follow it through. selected that the aspects in questions

"make sense" when so related. In this way we can reconstruct the "individual totality" of the phenomenon we want, so to speak, to re-possess intellectually. The "spirit of capitalism" was one of a whole series of *Zeitgeiste* and other "spirits" which German historiographers of the day were anxious to "know". The "elective affinity" which served Weber as the means by which to unite the Protestant ethic and the historical passage from "traditional" to "rational" behaviour, was not an empirical blunder, because the task which faced him was not to solve a "whodunnit", but to make this fact and shift understandable to his own age and culture. The success of the operation, by definition, was thus measured by the sense it made to those who wished to understand. And it must have made such sense, since it interpreted the birth of the modern era in terms both obvious and uncontroversial to the inhabitants of the confident, peaceful and prosperous fin-de-siècle world: of the unstoppable march of rationality, of wealth rearing frugally, of the growing secularism of the modern world. There was an elective affinity also between the motives imputed to the actors in the drama Weber was analysing and the concepts employed to articulate the world of the analysts. As to Calvin, Baxter, the Puritan saints and all the other unwitting religious promoters of the rational and secular world, they were examples of one of the most felicitous of Weber's categories of agent - that of the "vanishing mediator" (the name coined by Fredric Jameson, whose seminal study is not, unfortunately, among Marshall's sources): their very success in promoting a certain kind of conduct made them redundant. The religious prophets of rationality worked themselves out of a job.

This concerns the grounds on which Weber classifies conduct into the "rational" and the "traditional". Most people react rationally, indeed, but some conditions are more rational than others, or, rather, various conditions impose different forms on rational behaviour. Given the preference for better solutions rather than worse, one would need neither powerful religious sanctions to explain prudence and advance planning among the masters of complex manufacturing plants, nor the lack of them to account for the medieval merchant's love of hoarding and precious stones.

But this criticism already points beyond the confines of the debate as circumscribed by Weber, and there Marshall is reluctant to tread. The debate he is reviewing is fraught with radical disagreement and sometimes venomous controversy. But it remains, in a sense, a "family quarrel". The participants seek to establish whether the Master got his facts straight; but they seldom ask whether he set them to looking in the right place. Far from creating a true challenge to Weber's thesis, they only reaffirm its centrality by their efforts. The real challenge to Weber's thesis has come from outside the family - from thinkers like Freud, Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault, or, last but not least, Karl Marx. But Marshall is not here concerned with this real test of Weber's model.

In a short chapter devoted to the "spirit of capitalism" thesis, Frank Marshall has set for himself (writing, for instance, that in Weber "not the slightest evidence is produced to show that a new 'spirit of labour' was abroad as a complementary partner of the spirit of capitalism"), and reaches conclusions much more devastating for the whole controversy together with the thesis which triggered it off. Parkin's declaration, "I have tried not to let my own sense of awe at Weber's achievement degenerate into reverence", seems, to say the least, an

understatement. His is a very irreverent little book, and this, added to Parkin's usual wit and fluent prose, makes it delightful and compulsive reading. This is explicitly a student's book, and students will savour it as a down-to-earth antidote against the solemn exegesis which fills most of their obligatory *Weberiana*. Another virtue of Parkin's book is its compactness. Into a space of roughly ninety pages he condenses an astonishing amount of information concerning all the major aspects of Weber's legacy.

Conciseness, however, has its dangers, particularly in an introductory book for students. However much research may have gone into the formulation of objections to Weber, it cannot be demonstrated in a book of this size. Having been cured of their uncritical veneration for the texts, student readers may well contract no less grievous an affliction: a proclivity for short-cuts to criticism which bypass the acquisition of solid knowledge.

As for his chapter on class, status and party, particularly in an introductory book for students. However much research may have gone into the formulation of objections to Weber, it cannot be demonstrated in a book of this size. Having been cured of their uncritical veneration for the texts, student readers may well contract no less grievous an affliction: a proclivity for short-cuts to criticism which bypass the acquisition of solid knowledge.

Sovereignty's sacrifices

Michael Banton

LEO KUPER

Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century.
255pp. Yale University Press. £10.50.
0 300 02795 8

International Action Against Genocide.
170pp. Minority Rights Group. £1.20.
0 305 6252

In several Western countries there is a struggle over the history of the Holocaust. Those who wish to diminish its significance are losing the intellectual battle, but it looks as if little is happening to keep alive the memory of other genocidal massacres of recent times. Who but relatives of the slain will, in twenty years' time, want to know about the slaughter of 1 million Communists in Indonesia, the 3 million in Bangladesh, and the many thousands in Burundi, Kampuchea, East Timor, Uganda, Argentina, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, and the Lebanon? National sentiment is sustained by the recall of heroism in struggle, but it is difficult to know what lessons to draw from such occasions for collective shame. It is easier to push any reminders down the memory hole.

Leo Kuper has been more successful than others in discerning lessons in these horrid episodes. After describing the UN Convention on Genocide he discusses its etiology. A relatively popular hypothesis is that men find massive homicide repugnant, so that an ideological "legitimation" is a necessary precondition for genocide. This hypothesis eases the burden of guilt and can be defended the more obstinately because it is virtually impossible to test: Kuper is unsure of it, and quotes a French author reporting on the Lebanon:

Muslims. Young girls of the best Christian society, petty bourgeois costumed as Pierre Cardin or Courrèges, admirers of Brassens and Bob Dylan, castrated prisoners: university faculty, advocates of coexistence between the communities, embodying the wisdom of Islam and of Christianity, gouged out eyes and disembowelled women.

Contemporary "civilized" society is not so far removed from that of Ghenghis Khan and Timur Lank.

Potentially genocidal tendencies have sometimes been halted. Just before the independence of the newly partitioned India and Pakistan in 1947, Calcutta was ready for wholesale religious war. Mahatma Gandhi moved in as a one-man bandy force, and, by prayer and fasting, he preserved the peace. When the Nazis occupied Denmark, the Danes stood firm against the deportation of Jews. In every occupied or allied state in which the head of the main church immediately spoke out publicly against deportation, this saved most of those who would have been affected.

Most genocides are instigated by, or are the responsibility of, the government. It is the sovereign territorial state which claims, as an integral part of its sovereignty, the right to kill people under its rule. Since states invariably have some excuse for calling their actions something other than genocide, the United Nations - an organization of governments - defends their right to kill. The UN has officially notified of the genocidal actions in Burundi and Uganda. Yet, says Kuper, more lives might have been saved had there been no Organization of African States and no UN, since these bodies tended to condone the actions of the governments in question. In 1979 the new regime in Kampuchea initiated criminal proceedings against the former Prime Minister alleging his responsibility for genocide. Yet in the following month the UN voted to

continue the assignment of the Cambodian seat to the ousted government. Kuper asks if genocide is now a credential for membership in the UN General Assembly?

Kuper takes thirteen pages to describe how perhaps 800,000 Armenians were done to death in 1915-16, an appendix of two pages then describes the stages by which the UN Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities decided to delete any reference to the event in its study report on genocide. It seems that the only countries which can be rebuked by UN Committees are the unholy trinity of Chile, Israel and South Africa. They are the new scapegoats.

From his studies, Kuper concludes that despite its responsibility for the Convention on Genocide, the UN responds with indifference, if not condonation, to evidence of offences. Nevertheless he believes that the UN could be recalled to its duty by increased pressure from world opinion. In his book he offers some suggestions for international action which are now expanded in the pamphlet he has prepared for the Minority Rights Group. The UN's record, he says, is not totally negative. It has prevented some situations from deteriorating. Kuper wants an international penal code with a court to adjudicate upon accusations. He supports the call for a UN High Commissioner for Human Rights who could visit threatened populations and prepare reports. Regional institutions have a part to play. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights was apparently influential in bringing about a decline in the number of "disappearances" in Argentina, while a similar African commission might be effective in situations bedevilled by inter-regional tensions. Non-governmental agencies, as Dr Waldheim said, can provide a vital link. They can document breaches of the Convention. As Ben Whitaker of the Minority Rights Group has

suggested, a committee representing the non-governmental organizations could establish model shadow machinery to demonstrate to the UN how campaigns against genocide could be mounted.

Genocide represents the climax of a concern which Leo Kuper has pursued over many years and in many different books. If there were a peace prize for sociologists, it should be awarded to him.

Classes, Power, and Conflict: Classical and Contemporary Debates, edited by Anthony Giddens and David Held (646pp. Macmillan. Paperback £7.95, 0 333 32290 8), is intended as an introduction for students to contemporary research in the subject. The book contains selections from the writings of Marx, Lenin and Weber as well as essays by modern scholars such as David Harvey, Alec Nove and Murray Yanowitch. The essays are grouped under headings such as "Classes, Elites and the State", "Capitalism, Gender and Patriarchy" and "Class, Race and the City".

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commentary

Scenes from bourgeois life

Kate Flint

I Macchiaioli
City Art Gallery, Manchester

Like the Impressionists, the Italian Macchiaioli painters took their adopted name from an adverse review. The anonymous critic of 1861 who bestowed it upon them had noted accurately, albeit disapprovingly, that the basis of their work lay in the *macchie*, or patches, of colour which they applied to indicate areas of light and shade. The works on show at the City Art Gallery, Manchester, until July 24, demonstrate how these Florentine-based painters concentrated on the means by which light and shade could be most naturally represented, stressing, alongside this technical realism, the necessity for its application to subjects taken from contemporary society.

At the centre of the exhibition hangs Odoardo Borrani's "The Seamstresses of the Red Shirts" (1863). Four girls sit in a highly respectable drawing room fervently sewing Risorgimento battle dress, a portrait of Garibaldi hung on the wall behind them. Smaller sketches by Giovanni Fattori of infantry soldiers, and a preparatory canvas for "The Attack at Madonna della Scoperta," help document the artists' involvement in the 1859 campaign: an

involvement not unrelated to their artistic preoccupations. For the Macchiaioli were well aware of the fragmentation of cultural life in mid-century Italy, and a close link existed between enthusiasm for a united country and their demands for the establishment of a national artistic movement. Additionally, there was a close corollary between their holding of progressive political ideas and their willingness to experiment technically, to overthrow the artistic training they had received in the academies, and search for new topics to paint. As one of them, Telemaco Signorini, put it in 1867, they considered that their struggle against established forms was "given justification by the progress of history".

In their early years, the Macchiaioli concentrated on the problem of chiaroscuro. Puccinelli's "Footpath at the Muro Torto" (1852) presents protruding figures as solid blocks and triangles of black and brown, standing out against the paler greys and beiges of walls and footpath. Vito d'Ancona's "The Portico" (c. 1861) shows hanging washing and stacked boxes glimpsed through an archway as slabs of muted colour. Yet although such *plein air* works have attracted a considerable amount of twentieth-century critical attention, they are studies in the academic tradition of a preparatory sketch later worked up in a studio. As the catalogues of the 1850s and 1860s show, it was not these

paintings, with their suppression of surface detail and simplification of areas of light and shade, which the painters chose to send to public exhibitions. Rather, they showed portraits and scenes from bourgeois life (as well, initially, as more historical and literary themes which go unrepresented in this exhibition) which combined their formal interests with a slicker technical finish. Thus Zandomenighi's painting from his early Macchiaioli phase, "The Reader" (1860/66) partly silhouettes the wide-dressed contemplative woman against a slightly darker plain wall behind; Abbati's black clothed mourner progresses across the dull cream marble paving of a small cemetery in "The Holy Gates"; Silvestro Lega's figures are grouped in attitudes of relaxed sociability, enjoying the warm evening light of "The Visit to the Villa". All these paintings are small in scale as well as quiet in tone: despite their adoption of the contemporary subject, the Macchiaioli never, unlike their immediate French counterparts, forced on their spectators the notion that modern life is not only important, but worthy of the same monumental treatment that had previously been granted only to academic themes.

The exhibition's sub-title, "The Italian Impressionists", is excusable as a crowd-puller. It serves, however, to underplay the Macchiaioli's important innovative role, and to foster a misconception deliberately put about by such nineteenth-century Italian critics as Diego Martelli and Adriano Cecconi in an attempt to increase the international status of these artists. Perhaps attempting to disguise the provinciality of Italian art, Cecconi in speaking of "the Macchiaioli", or "Impressionists if we prefer to call them that", had suggested that their aims, if not styles, were interchangeable. He followed Martelli in stating, without any justification, that the painters were "agreed that their art consisted, not in the search for form, but in the manner of rendering the impressions which they receive from nature." But the links which existed between the Italians and the Impressionists remained at the occasional personal level; Degas's portrait of his friend Martelli hangs in Glasgow. The French connection was principally with the painters of bourgeois naturalism: with early Degas and Manet canvases, and with Paul-Louis Delancey's "At the Piano" (1873) and Borrani's somewhat sentimental study of a well-dressed woman instructing her maid, "The Illiterate" (1869). Such atmospheric landscapes as Signorini's misty green "Among the Olive Trees at Settignano" have more in common with Corot and the Barbizon school, initial inspirers of the Macchiaioli in the 1850s, than with the interplay of sunlight and shadows investigated by the later Impressionists. Certain other paintings show hints of the time such as Burne-Jones, George Howard and Leighton. The orange-clad lady reclining in Cecconi's "The Hammock" is reminiscent of the decorative elegance, the style of the Pre-Raphaelite movement later in the century.

It is towards the formal and decorative that many of these small, private pictures tend. The Macchiaioli, with the occasional exception of Fattori's depictions of harsh peasant life in the Maremma, were not social realists. Other contemporary Italians—Cammarano in Naples, Palazzi in L'Aquila—were exhibiting elsewhere their protests at the poverty of their country, the harshness of agricultural labourers in the Abruzzi. There is nothing disturbing in the subject matter of the Macchiaioli's calm, tidy scenes of bourgeois society, return to it at this lowest point, just as his parents prepare to ship themselves back to the Old World. For all its serenity, it depicts, precisely, the social and economic conditions which, as it recalls, were the most persistent thinking-image in the artist's mind. The exhibition introduces the English public to a group of artists who played a crucial role in the initiation and development of modern Italian art.

Shaking out the meaning

Michael Meyer

Peer Gynt
The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

I am told that Dylan Thomas was once asked to make a version of *Peer Gynt* for sound radio, and agreed, but never did it. He would have been wonderfully suited to the task, for he showed in *Under Milk Wood* how effortlessly he could move from comedy to tragedy, from light to weighted dialogue, and this above all is what *Peer Gynt* demands. In the first three acts, when Peer is a peasant of twenty, the language, with its ebullience and extravagant imagery, resembles nothing so much as *The Playboy of the Western World*. In Act Four, the middle-aged Peer takes in a pretentious, would-be epigrammatic style like an Aldous Huxley character; while Act Five is Shakespearean in conception, racy and colloquial one moment, high poetry the next, yet moving between the two with such ease and simplicity as to leave no sense of incongruity.

David Rudkin was an imaginative choice as adaptor for the new RSC production at the Other Place. Ron Daniel has had the idea of setting the play in Ireland, and Rudkin is an Ulsterman, besides being a powerful dramatic writer. I have long felt that *Peer Gynt* would profit by an Irish setting. Before translating it myself twenty years ago I soaked myself in Synge and tried to give the first three acts a Syngean flavour. When in 1978 the BBC planned a radio production I asked Martin Jenkins, the director, if he would consider doing it with an all-Irish cast, and suggested Denis Quillley for the lead. Jenkins agreed, and the result was splendid; all those peasant superstitions which seem unlikely when articulated in any English dialect sounded totally convincing.

I have never known Acts One to Three work better than at The Other Place. Rudkin takes Ibsen's text by the scruff and shakes it till the meaning flies out; his language is robust, concise, dark and funny, and Ron Daniels's staging is powerful and imaginative, as is Chris Dyer's design. When Peer carries his mother Aase across the stream, a rope harrow is stretched across the stage through which Peer picks his way. The trolls are shown as venomous villagers, realistically dressed but with huge lemur eyes, malevolently presiding over by Jeffrey Dench. Branda Patera is the best Aase I have ever seen, small, doting and ferocious, and Sinead Cusack makes Ingrid and the Greenland One (She in the Green, Rudkin calls her) like Synge's Peggyn Mike, which is what she should be. And Derek Jacobi, not an obvious choice for a peasant lad of twenty, is gutsy, devious and commented as the little role demands. The great death-scene with Aase is superbly moving.

If only one could stop there; for the rest of the evening is the saddest anticlimax. It is as though the adaptor, director and leading actor had died, and the whole conception altered. Hardly another syllable of Irish is heard, apart from Solvieg's few appearances, the ship's crew and the funeral feast. It is of course logical to make the middle-aged Peer of Act Four, a self-made cosmopolitan, Cressus, talk like an English gent, but since no one else in this act is Irish dialect and writes in a totally different idiom, and his language, curiously flat and often obscure, becomes a light sardonic touch throughout, even in the madhouse scene. His absence from the text means that the opening dinner-party, the long soliloquy monologues and the country scene go for almost nothing. The few laughs that this act produces occur off the text, as in the witty series of projected lantern slides which show the sinking of Peer's yacht, and Chris Dyer's contorting of the monkey. The

Memnon scene, usually cut when cuts are needed, is included, but the words of the song are incomprehensible; the madhouse scene, heavily and needlessly truncated, makes less impact than I have ever known.

Act Five opens well with a finely staged storm at sea, but nothing that follows lives up to this. All the scenes are, as so often with them, begun and almost as soon as they have begun, the funeral feast counts for little; the graveside preacher, speaking for some reason in a London accent, finds his great speech shredded; the wonderful threadballs scene becomes another obscure song; even the onion scene falls flat. The Solveig is not well cast, and there is some heavy over-acting, with Derek Godfrey, strangely out of form, the worst culprit. Largely

unintelligible as Von Eberkopf, he plays the Strange Passenger like a dry run for Count Dracula, and is knowing and sinister as the Button Moulder whom Ibsen wrote. (Laurence Olivier made the same mistake in the much over-rated 1944 Guthrie production, a production of which Guthrie told me he was not particularly proud.) Only Jeffrey Dench, as the ship's captain and in his reappearance as the Troll King, emerges from this act with much credit.

It is difficult to apportion the blame for this. One would have expected Act Five to suit Rudkin better than Act Four, but the great images elude him, he is obscure where Ibsen is clear, and he frequently gives Derek Jacobi downright exit lines where the text is upbeat. But presumably the cuts are

Daniel's, and they have been unskillfully and damagingly made. Given all this, perhaps it is unfair to shade Jacobi for not matching the power and mischief of his earlier scenes. In a white wig which makes him look distractingly like Lord Boothby, he lacks perhaps the weight that this act requires — the aged Peer makes demands comparable to those of Lear — and I feel sure that a return to his Irish accent on Peer's return to Norway would have helped. But for the last half of the play he is being asked to make bricks with poor quality straw. The final scene comes over as Victorian sentimentality, which is not the way it should. No one unfamiliar with the play would have guessed that Act Five is one of the great last acts. Yet one will not soon forget those first ninety minutes.

Usefulness

Alan Bell

The Houghton Library, 1942-1982
Harvard University

The summer exhibition at the Houghton Library, Harvard (also to be shown at the Grolier Club, New York, in December and January) celebrates the fortieth anniversary of the foundation and the sixteen years of William H. Bond's distinguished reign as Librarian with a wide-ranging display of the acquisitions made in recent years. Bill Bond's services to the Anglo-American bibliographical community are well known, culminating this year in his Sanders readership at Cambridge (England), but the showing mounted by his colleagues demonstrates once again the leadership and learning that he has applied to the development of the Houghton collections on lines laid down by the late William A. Jackson (with Mr Bond even then as his lieutenant).

The exhibits range chronologically from some important eighteenth-century fragments of Gregory the Great's *Moralia* in the Luxeuil script to the manuscript of Solzhenitsyn's Harvard commencement address of 1978, with printed and manuscript material of all periods to emphasize and develop the special strengths of the library. A collection which includes amongst its select recent acquisitions Mr Arthur Houghton's deposit of a substantial portion of Boswell's *Journal* manuscript, or the page-proofs of *Ulysses*, a fine *Platform of Church Discipline* or a batch of forged Chatterton "originals", is indeed a rich one, and the slim but beautifully-produced catalogue (Harvard College Library, \$20.00) worthily commemorates it.

Some of the printed materials are absolutely rare — Shelley's *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1820 is one of only seven known, Byron's satire on George IV's visit to Ireland, *The Irish Avatar* 1821 is one of but two copies recorded — but it is not mere rarity that has so appealed to the Houghton when acquiring them. Mr Bond himself has written that "the test of a librarian's acquisitions is not rarity, curiosity or monetary value. These are side issues, too often mistaken for the main purpose of collecting. The real test is the use scholars make of the collections." Each of the acquisitions recorded here is of genuine scholarly usefulness, and the preface to the catalogue records the Houghton's "special commitment to such acquisitions as 'acts of faith in the future of the university'. It is a belief that has been generously shared for the whole community of learning, and the tradition firmly established by W. A. Jackson has been most skilfully and ably continued by Mr Bond, and his successor will find their example a challenging one.

The conductor of Gluck's *Armide* at Christ Church, Spitalfields (reviewed on June 18) was Richard Hickox; we apologise for misnaming him.

New Oxford books: Literature

The Selected Poems of Roy Campbell

Chosen by Peter Alexander

Roy Campbell's verse is remarkable for its variety, ranging from short lyrics of great sensuous beauty to devastating satires. He was also an acclaimed translator from Spanish and Portuguese, and some of his translations of St John of the Cross are included in this selection. Campbell emerges as a modern poet of considerable power, whose work is ripe for reappraisal after years of indifference. £7.50

Ghosts at my Back

Tom Rawling

Tom Rawling began to write poetry only when he was sixty, but his poems at once began to make their way at readings and into magazines. This is his first full-length collection. It is remarkable for the delicacy, tact, and freshness with which he handles language in a series of poems about his ancestors, his family, and his main interests: gardening and fly-fishing in Cumberland. £3.95

The Flower Master

Medbh McGuckian

This is the first full-length collection by one of the most successful of the younger Ulster poets. Medbh McGuckian has been described by *Ahnd Stevenson in The Irish Times* as "a clever (probably) as Craig Raine, as perceptive (possibly) as Elizabeth Bishop... Reading (her) poems, one senses that thoughts and perceptions make mysterious connection with a hidden terror in the poet's mind." £4

The Will to Believe

Novellists of the Nineteen-Thirties

Richard Johnstone

As a period in literary history, the thirties have a distinct character. A study of six novellists of the "thirties generation" — Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, Christopher Isherwood, Edward Upward, Rex Warner, and George Orwell — reveals their powerful need for "something to believe in". The questions asked by writers during these years, about the function of belief and its relationship to art, continue to be important, not least because they have not yet been satisfactorily answered. £8.50

The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth

VI. The Later Years Part 3 1835-1938

Edited by Alan G. Hill
This third volume of *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth* in the troubled years of early Victorian England, provides indispensable material for understanding the later phases of his career, while also offering innumerable insights into the great poets of the time. This new edition contains over six hundred letters that have never been published before. Second edition £35

Oxford University Press



Odoardo Borrani's "The Seamstresses of the Red Shirts", from the exhibition reviewed here.

Retrospective on a generation

Richard Combs

Georgia's Friends
Various cinemas

Georgia's Friends (or *Four Friends* as it was originally and more pertinently titled) is the story of a generation coming of age in the 1960s, a subject typical of its director, Arthur Penn. So much so that one fears he might have been ill-advised to return to it. After all, the films that made his reputation during and just beyond that decade — *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Alice's Restaurant*, *Little Big Man* — drew on their own life and times, they were "of" the 1960s, where the retrospective *Georgia's Friends* can only be "about" the decade. It is a time both too close and too far away: hindsight doesn't yet

have much to add and nostalgia seems a sad admission that the 1970s interposed nothing of their own. Penn, significantly, failed to find a subject in that decade, producing only two films, the brilliant anti-thriller *Night Moves* and the quirky anti-Western *The Missouri Breaks*.

So why start the 1980s by scurrying back to the 1960s? For *Georgia's Friends*, without lending new insight into the important events of that time, without really concerning itself with them (although it has a number of images of them, such as Vietnam, the moon landing and the Kennedy assassinations), demonstrates that the 1960s were probably the time for Penn. A particular combination of anarchic energy and popular dreaming chimed with his own intelligence, restlessness and keenness for experiment, making him probably the most significant

American film-maker of the time. That time has now become almost an ideal, which leads to the particular tension and fascination of *Georgia's Friends*: a mellow, harmonious-seeming film dealing with unharmonious emotions, a film which suggests that Penn's closest predecessor in the American cinema might be the director with whom he has least in common politically, John Ford. What they share is a longing for community, which Ford projected back into an idealized vision of the West and which Penn now tries to construct from the idealism of the 1960s. *Alice's Restaurant* was a report from that decade's front line; *Georgia's Friends* is its classical statement.

Seen another way, the characters in *Alice's Restaurant* are experiencing a sense of rootlessness in contemporary America, where those in *Georgia's Friends* seem to be struggling to escape

their roots. Coming from opposite directions (hippy drop-outs, four-square middle-Americans), they are both looking for a home of their own. *Georgia's Friends* begins with an immigrant reunion in the New World: young Danilo Prozor being "introduced" to his Yugoslavian father on a train platform in Gary, Indiana. Scarcely has the reassembled family made the journey to its new home in the bleak steel town of East Chicago, than we go forward in time to meet Danny (Craig Wasson), now eighteen and ambitious for college and the American Dream, in which he seems to believe in a pure and intense way. His three friends are Tom (John Melzner), David (David Huddleston), and the group catalyst Georgia (Joey Teller), a self-professed free spirit forever declaring that the small town isn't built that can tame her spirit and her Isadora Duncan-ish destiny. All the boys fancy themselves in love with Georgia, but when she offers herself to Danny, his romantic purity gets in the way.

Separate paths are plotted for all four friends through the decade, although the film does insist on Danny and Georgia periodically coming together. They are romantically predestined after all, but their lovers' spats also serve to mark the tides of disillusionment and hope reborn through the era. In outline, this inevitably sounds like a "best sellers" tale-romp through the recent past, a classic of soap opera. But Penn and his screen-writer Steve Tesich have scrambled the outline, or rather allowed bits of it to disappear suddenly while we leap-frog into somebody else's life or take off on a new tangent. Voice-over comments from various characters are cleverly used to suggest both the discontinuity of the story-line and an underlying emotional continuity, the strength of the community even one as limited as East Chicago. For Danny rejects his past — most spectacularly, when he tries to marry out of it into Eastern seaboard aristocracy, leading to a moment of Greek tragedy — the 1960s as the only time he has seen them — only to return to it at his lowest ebb, just as his parents prepare to ship themselves back to the Old World. For all its serenity, it depicts, precisely, the social and economic conditions which, as it recalls, were the most persistent thinking-image in the artist's mind. The exhibition introduces the English public to a group of artists who played a crucial role in the initiation and development of modern Italian art.

position the man was in at the beginning of the scene — relaxed in the armchair, sipping beer from a can and watching the washing-machine as if it were television.

This scene is preceded by a brief lyrical opening in which the man and woman are euphorically in love, and a comic café sequence in which the woman makes friends with the two contemporary harpies. But the style of the play — and this is the other extravagant risk — is not established until the second act: *Kalldewey, Farce* is a farce in which situations are plucked away from story-line. The play is structured around continuities of theme, character and imagery: verbal and theatrical — but, like a boy frolic, it is a new bike. Strauss doesn't care which direction he is going in. The characters play games with each other and with us. Television is sketched in a sequence about a sadistic foreman and his wife who turn up as guests on the same programme. A locked door reduces an actor to believing that he can't make his entrance, while an actress takes full advantage of having the stage to herself. The entrance shows the man and the woman, now much older, meeting on a train platform, still in the same clothes, still in the same pose, as if they had never parted. The play is a birthday party, a party of the uninvited guest, Kalldewey, the only one to bring a present. This is another

scene that depends on a door which won't open, and it involves another stage conjuring trick. Unable to go out through the front door, which has jammed, Kalldewey is ordered to crawl under a tablecloth. He obeys, but disappears.

The play's style depends mainly on unpredictable modulation: between hysteria and conversational cliché, between aggressions repressed in boredom and frustration and aggressions that break the rules. The play was premiered in Hamburg, but it is hard to believe that it received, or ever will receive, a more stylish or better acted production than this one, which has three astonishing sets by Karl Ernst Hermann, floor sloping sharply downwards towards the audience in the first act, and walls corrugating chillingly towards a deeply recessed rear window in the third.

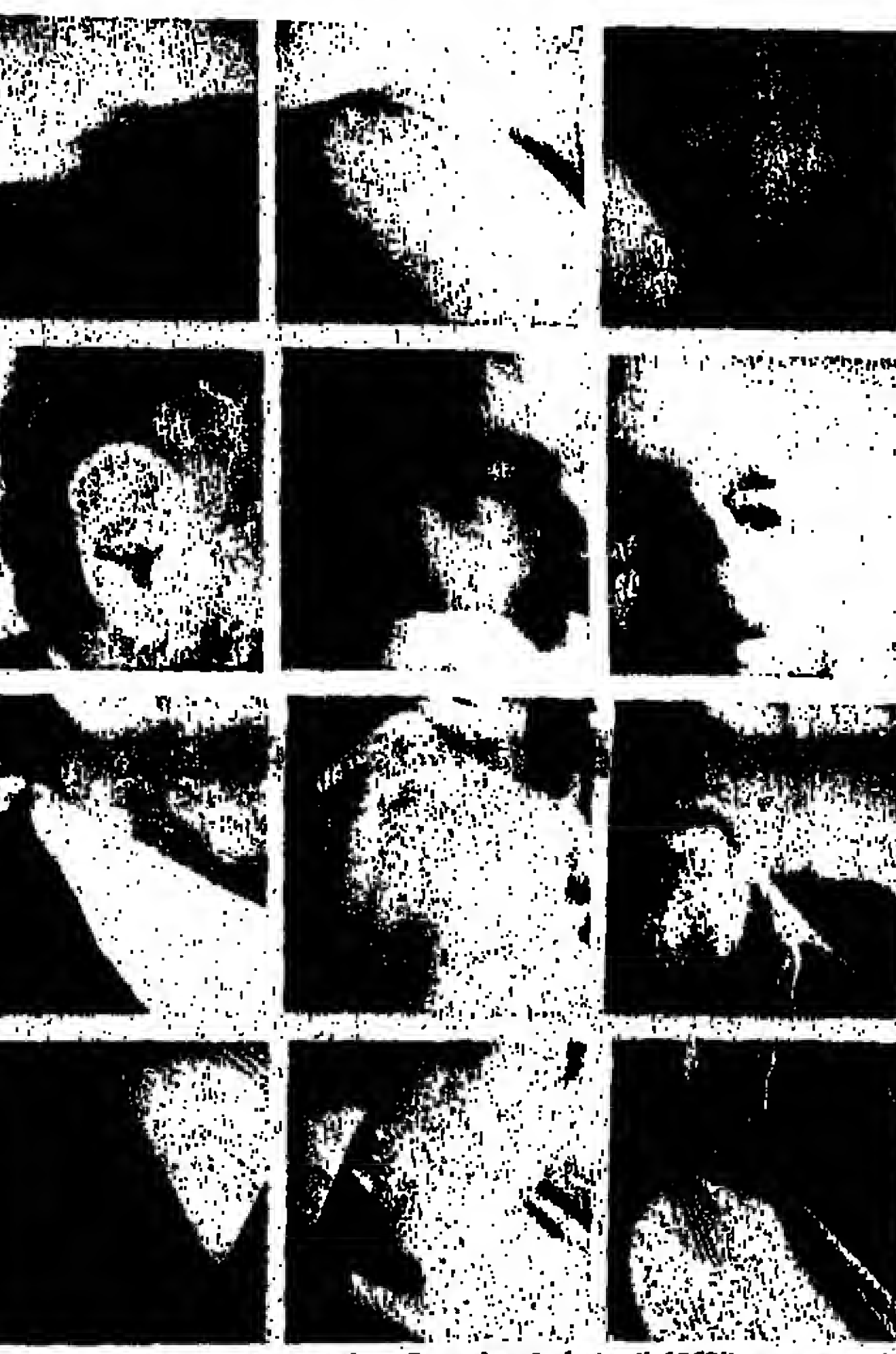
Otto Sander is reprobate as the man, and Julia Lampe, cleverly controls her energy as the ranges from the punk happy to the suavely condescending television comedienne. Edith Clever delicately underplays all the subtleties of female rage against the male without underlining the hysteria, and she is hilariously funny as the reluctant, spectacled housewife. The play is a birthday party, a party of the uninvited guest, Kalldewey, the only one to bring a present. This is another

Limb from limb

Ronald Hayman

Kalldewey, Farce
Schaubühne am Lohninger Platz,
Berlin

One of the two extravagant risks Both Strauss takes in his new play, *Kalldewey, Farce*, is to end his first act with a bang that will make all the subsequent climaxes seem fairly small. At first the woman sits solidly on the fridge, watching her two girlfriends terrorize her man. She whistles while they cross-question him about bending her up, remaining impassive when they threaten to cut off his right ear, but she joins in when they pull at his hair and legs as if trying to dismember him. In spite of the pictures in the programme (Julius Salome with John the Baptist's head, and a trick photograph of Antonin Artaud, holding Roger Vitrac's legs while a girl, some distance away, holds the rest of his body) we are not expecting them to succeed. The sofa is overturned, and they are partly concealed behind it when they manage to pull off both arms and both legs. It is a trick sofa, and when it is pulled back into position, the actor is safely concealed inside. The arms and legs are fed into the washing-machine, while the lifeless trunk remains in front of the sofa. The woman ends up in the



"André Enmerich, Los Angeles, Saturday 3rd April 1982", a composite polaroid by David Hockney from the exhibition at the Knoedler Gallery, referred to on this week's cover. (Photograph courtesy of Petersburg Press.)

Author, Author

Competition No 77
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than July 23. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers to be opened, or failing that, the most nearly correct — in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *Times Literary Supplement*, PO Box 7,200 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ. The solution and results will appear on July 30.

1 A: Dear gentleman.
How fares our gracious lady?
B: As well as one so great and so
May hold together. On her thighs
Which never tenderly hath borne
She is something before her time
delivered.
2 When the first baby laughed for
the first time, the laugh broke into a
thousand places and they all went
skipping about, and that was the
beginning of faeries.
3 It was a cold night and just after
the baby was born snow started to
fall. The midwife, distressed by the
general inadequacy of the arrange-

ments, and afraid lest the baby should catch cold, had concentrated all available sources of heat in the bedroom: a gas fire was burning and there were two small electric fires.

Competition No 73
Winner: Mrs M. D. Lacey
Answer:
1 Ah, the delicious weeks of honey-moon!

Soon they returned, and, after strange adventures,
Settled at Balham by the end of June.
Rupert Brooke, "Sonnet Reversed"

2 "The cakes are ordered; how my lips will flutter
When I stand fainting at the marriage altar!
But I'm to have him! — Oh the vile debauch!"

Strange Prologue thus for Laura's
Honey-moon!
Winthrop Mackworth Praed, "Prologue to *The Honey-moon*"
3 Ought she to break her engagement off? She was inclined to, but not — it would cause so much trouble to others; besides, she wasn't convinced that love is necessary to a successful union. If love is everything, few marriages would survive the honeymoon.
E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India*, Chapter 15

Bloomsday 1982

Eric Korn

"James Joyce, is it? That gobshite they threw out of the country for his dirty writings?" asked the taxi-driver, giving me the perfect opening (but you don't believe me) for an account of Bloomsday celebrations in Dublin in Joyce's centenary year.

Others spoke more generously. "It is time to repay some of the honour and fame he has brought to Dublin," said the President of a Dublin Republic, welcoming a bust by Marjorie Fitzgibbon on Stephen's Green. "He's got a fine head on him," said a bystander appreciatively as the covers came off, for all the world as if he were a glass of Guinness ("James's Choice," say the adverts). But the bust's grandson noted sourly that the monument was paid for by American Express, and stayed in Paris. Other absent invitees (or invited absentees) were Norman Mailer, Marguerite Yourcenar and Samuel Beckett, but Sir William Empson and Dennis Potter and Tom Stoppard and Burgess and Borges were there, and Simon and Garfunkel, though perhaps on a different errand, and Hugh Kenner and Salman Rushdie and "I think I have been talking to Lech Walesa", mumbled a name-numbered citizen at the State reception.

"Here Comes Everybody," they called the Symposium, all too truly, and here too came I, in a trainload of Scandinavian Scouts and Scoutesses (integrated of course) filling the corridors with canoe paddles and reading something called *Dublinbird*. I'd chosen my travelling edition of *The Words with a dandy's care* (not the vellum, I suggest, Sir, it might seem a trifle parvenu) but a big two-volume paperback of *Ulysses*, Hamburg 1933. Stuart Gilbert's authorized revision, in the sought-after second impression, with the first initials repaired and no time for entropy to do its ugly work, the "corrected" edition; supposedly, until a perfect text issues from Munich next year; and I carried a neat transtypist, so that Radio Telefís Éireann's thirty-one hour reading, every word from Slatkoff to Ves uninterrupted by sleep or weather forecasts, could go whithersoever I went.

So I came Bloomsdaying into what seemed an indifferent city, until I observed that all the magazine covers featured Joyce's features, and *The Inside Guide to Dublin* had filled its odd corners with encouraging tidbits: "Did you know that James Joyce invariably overstepped?" "Did you know that James Joyce's favourite wine was white?" And the bookshop windows were Joycean with *Ulysses* Calendars and Biographies of Bloom, with *The Wake* annotated at IR£25.48, and maps and vade mecum and pilgrims' guides to the Stations of the Odyssey, with postcards and every text imaginable, and (fairly unimaginable) books by a Jesuit, *James Joyce's School-days*. (He has a sensational find: the punishment book from Clongowes, with no mention of four on the hand with the paddybat for breaking his glasses and being a lazy

idle schemer: but instead J. Joyce four times for vulgar language, a mild dose compared with Lynch's eighteen for not knowing Virgil and Nasty Rooch's ten for "constant lateness at duties".)

Literature began breaking in: at Newman House they were collecting signatures in the entrance hall for the T.S.'s petition against War, though some cash-handed scholar had just put his elbow through the photograph ("he has the face of a besotted Christ") frame; and David Norris, Chairman of the Centenary Committee, was complaining gloatingly that in the morning, when Hugh Kenner had gone to put a plaque on 52 Upper Clanbrassill Street, where Leopold Bloom would have been born if he had been, know-better neighbours had gathered round to tell him he'd got it all wrong, the Blooms had'n't lived there at all, you must be thinking of Lower Clanbrassill, where Joyce's father, William, lived. There was a marvellous exhibition on Joyce's student days, giving flesh and feature and family to those epiphanic glimpses of his fellows in *Stephen Hero*; and all kinds of good things like the Minute Book of the Literary and Historical society and J.L.'s copies of *Ibsen*, and the reviews from *The Irish Booklover* ("no clean-minded person could possibly allow it to remain within reach of his wife") and one of the most memorable throwaways in all literary reminiscence, from William Butler's *Rambles in Eirinn* (M. H. Gill, 1907):

We intended riding to Glendalough and back, but were obliged to modify this programme before we reached Dalkey, owing to a certain pleasant circumstance which might be termed a morning call. As we were leaving the suburb my comrade said casually that there were two men living in a tower somewhere to the left who were creating a sensation.

And there was a copy of Lamb's *Adventures of Ulysses*, used as a class book in the College. I was nudged. "It's published, do you see, by BROWN AND NOLAN, BRUNO NOLAN," said a stranger, temporarily deranged by paronomasia.

I went and listened to the Home Team, as it were, having a little quiet fun at the expense of cosmopolitan critics so full of symbols and structuralism they don't know who actually won the Gold Cup in 1904. Chuckles were had at references to the dangers of foot and mouth disease ceasing strictly in bullocks, and how this represented all kinds of stability, references made by unworried academics who don't know that bullocks are generally infertile. The critic who says that the crucial symbol is Stephen's refusal of the coffee, representing Communion, was collated with the critic who says that the crucial symbol is Stephen's acceptance of the eucora, representing Communion, to their mutual disadvantage. The moral seemed to be that you must understand Ireland to understand *Ulysses*, and while you're all welcome and we need your advice ("I think of Matthew Arnold; I think of William Wordsworth; I think of all those great critics, none of them, alas, Irish..."), you needn't think a week in Dublin will give you the insight that is our birthright.

It became clear that there was a certain diversity of approach. On the one hand, the international academic community, serious persons by and large who simply wish to spend every waking moment discussing the works, a laudable ambition. The International Joyce Symposium, of which this is number eight, has a commodious venue, a real location, between Zurich, Trieste, Paris and Dublin, and its more single-minded participants are fairly indifferent to locale, though some of the younger students did become a little ecstatic as though the Tolkein Society was actually meeting in Hobbiton: this year. These professionals organized this fifty-day workshop sessions at which Joyce's name was linked with almost everyone else's, in which every line of *Finnegans Wake* was treated of meaning, ground then on a translation of penultima, which became over-elaborated by analogies ("all Joyce's works begin with a 'd' and end with a 'dijary'") or numbers

(especially 22 and 39), or the Romanian component in the *Wake* ("but this is also a phrase meaning peasants' cotton drawers, exactly of the kind worn by Brancusi").

On the other hand, but considerably overlapping in personnel, there was the largely Dublin-based Centenary Committee, Joycean triumphalists, indeed Joyce's acceptance, indeed Joyce's apotheosis, in his home town, is a personal vindication, people with the equally laudable aim of establishing Study Centres and statuary, memorials living and stony, and ensuring that everyone has a good time; and properly not averse to accepting subsidies, even from those to whom Joyce week, however admirable, is just an event to squeeze in between the Ballsbridge Horse Trials and Gay Pride Week. "James Joyce, Patron Saint of the Tourist Bored," wrote a spiteful pavement artist under his physiognomy: you couldn't take a step without treading on a Portrait of the Artist. And thence it is a step to Thomas Geary's Official James Joyce Medallion in gold or silver or platinum, in a strictly limited edition that won't be exhausted till Thomas Geary has turned over five million dollars, and to the exhibition at the Guinness Visitor Centre, and Bloom's Hotel with Avocado Plurabelle in the Anna Livia Room and Sole Bloom and the Martello Tower in sugar lumps in the Blazes Boylan Coffee Lounge and Patricia Levinton doing Molly Bloom's soliloquy every evening in the Earwicker Bar. She was one of a posy of Blooms, a coddle of mollities: two of them, I take, your choice of Fionola Flanagan and Sibhanna McKenna and Pegg Monahan on the radio. But I went to another one-person show: Eamon Morrissey's *Joyce-mani* at the Peacock, though it meant missing the evening lecture at the Mansion House, where the hideous acoustics, together with a sound system apparently designed by Vincent and Ludwig, audio engineers, had just utterly defeated Sir William Empson. In the event, the sound system was hastily ripped out and rewired, and Anthony Burgess's bravura performance, "To Say Nothing of Another Member," was one of the week's triumphs. But there was excellent fun with Morrissey, a spirited if not a profound performer; for him the central episode of *Ulysses* is "Cyclops," Bloom's encounter with the enraged Citizen who hurls the biscuit tin, the sequence that ends, memorably, with "Ben-Bloom Ellijah at an angle of forty-five degrees over Donohoe's in Little Green Street like a shot off a shovel."

Bloomsday itself began with a various and chilly crowd of devotees at Synagogue, some swimming at Forty Foot ("If I had a scrotum it would surely have lightened," remarked an Irish author of the female persuasion, others shying on the ground, absurdly with electric razors, or toasting the end of Buck's Flax in honour of plump Buck Mulligan, well, you couldn't eat Mulligan stew at that hour.

But even before that the radio began the reading, a vivid and respectful performance with an immense and accurate variety of Dublin voices (though Bloom was too unispirited for some), and illuminating, obscuring illuminated (Roland McHugh, called in as textual adviser on the curious grounds of his familiarity with the problems of assigning narrative to the optimum number of narrators without creating false boundaries, a little like colouring a map with three inks). I carried it everywhere, feeling absurd at first, but no one objected except a pedantic faculty wife from Ohio, and so many people were doing the same that actually the air of Dublin began to fill up with Joyce's words. The time of the narrative moved sometimes ahead of, sometimes behind the sun, miraculously it matched precisely with it at 2.55 when a hundred odd costumed characters from the Mayor of Dublin (playing the Viceroy) to various unofficial improvisers, took to the streets to recreate the "Wandering Rocks" sequence: it was moving, sedate and delightful. Spectators rushed, huddled, along the crowded quays, or struggled with an over-sized map to decide whether to

catch Dilly Daedalus upbraiding her improvident father along Bachelor's Walk and watch Bloom and Blazes Boylan pass, or dash to the Dublin Bread Company in Dame Street where Buck Mulligan sees Parnell's brother-in-law. There was rather a surplus of ladies in Edwardian underwear for a strict textual accuracy, though this is not a complaint, and while some of the minor characters showed extraordinary conscientiousness (old Ben Dollard, flies agape, explained his domestic problems over and over again to Father Cowley for all to overhear), some of the principals reacted to the anachronistic excitement of cameras. Leopold waved his copy of *Sweets of Sin*, enthusiastically, the blind striping kept getting helped across a road he wasn't meant to cross: "Would that be Mrs Daedalus?" shouted a bemused camerawoman, and in the benign confusion many innocent passers-by were interviewed.

The Ormond Hotel, where most of the cast find themselves at the end of the hour's peripetia (except of course Father Connors SJ, away in Mountjoy Square, and Molly and Blazes at it what remains of no 7, Eccles Street) added to the confusion by letting slip that their share of the celebrations would be to sell beer at 1904 prices, although a secondary rumour, that they were only accepting per-decimal currency, had earlier started a run on the piggy banks; a thrifty crowd, not all literary scholars, blocked the approaches and caused a traffic jam that may still be reverberating.

Fifty years on: Trotsky

The TLS of June 30, 1932 carried the following review by C. Bechofer Roberts of Leon Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution, Volume 1*, translated by Max Eastman:

Nobody acquainted with Trotsky's career needs to be told that he is a vigorous and remorseless adversary, or that he has a mastery of impassioned eloquence which, to whoever happens to accept his code of values, must be extremely stimulating. These qualities, however, do not altogether fit him for the role of historian, especially of events in which, or in the immediate consequences of which, he himself participated. The actual facts of the outbreak of the Revolution enter the book chiefly as pegs on which to hang one or other of the two main threads; and, since Trotsky carefully selects his evidence for the purpose, it follows that his volume offers the reader little enlightenment in any attempts to unravel the main problems which still confront students of that period.

This subordination of facts to these, goes far to destroy the value of Trotsky's book as a contribution to historical knowledge. The reader is left with, on the one hand, long and complex discourses on Leninist themes, and, on the other, certain picturesque snapshots of people and events. Certainly it would be hard to find a more telling sidelight on the last Tsarist Ministry than the anecdote he relates on the authority of the Speaker of the Duma:

With the first news of the movement of a crowd toward the Ministry was in session, all the lights in the building were immediately put out. The rumour, however, proved false; the attack did not take place; and when the lights were turned on one of the members of the Tsarist Government was found "to his own surprise" under the table.

Again, his account of a group of strikers accusing the Cosaks, hat in hand, and begging them to hang the workers, whereupon the Cosaks looked at each other "in some special way" and charged the strikers, seems to bear the hallmark of authenticity; as also do his two descriptions of the manner in which companies of the garrison were elected to multiply by stories of police and military brutality to the crowds. Trotsky's pictures of the main participants in the Revolutionary drama

There was more street theatre later, when David Norris took the keys of 35 St George's Street, a crumbling mansion once Signor Maginni's Dancing Academy, as the future home of a museum and poetry centre. "Why spend money on the dead when there is none for living artists?" shouted a passing figure, presumably that of a living artist, and did not stay for the swift riposte: "We always have begrudgers and Brendan Behan had the word for them."

Brendan Behan's word, I'm informed, was "Fuck the begrudgers", but it was a more elegant toast that Borges offered at the Bloomsday Banquet later; once again the sound system, and an ironic samba from the next ballroom, victimized the speaker, but a wonderful Borgesian phrase snatched my ear: "if these books last long enough - and I think they may last for ever - 'Dublin had done its best to ensure this. The costumes and the critics, the devotion and the exploitation, together had scraped a little hole in the surface of reality, through which the myth could shine."

And it is early on this second Bloomsday morning, and they are grilling kidneys in Bloom's Hotel, and in Jury's Hotel and the Clockwork Hilton, the fine tang of faintly scented urine (page 56 line 3) faintly falling on the Royal Tara China Bust (£287 + p and p), on Davy Burns, and farther westward, on the Chapelized Bridge, renamed the Anna Livia, and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the Dead.

Sibilla Aleramo

Sir, - A misprint in my review (June 11) of *Sibilla Aleramo e il suo tempo* changed the Christian name, and thus the sex, of one of the two excellent editors. She is Bruna Conti, not Bruno. The other is Alba Morino.

MASOLINO D'AMICO.

Università degli Studi di Roma, Istituto di Lingua e Letteratura Inglese, Via Magenta 2, 00185 Roma.

Sir, - Perhaps I may be allowed to correct Masolino d'Amico's extravagantly moralistic portrayal (June 11) of Sibilla Aleramo's life and work. Why, first of all, the recourse to a double standard of sexual morality? It is hard to imagine an epithet equivalent to "nymphomaniac" being applied to a male writer with a similar personal history. And on what basis is the reader expected to assess Croce's judgment of her decision to leave the marital home? The reasons offered are boredom with provincial life and the experience of a stimulating love affair. Her husband's brutality and infidelity are not mentioned. The difficulties in which her action placed her are also ignored: under Italian law at that time she was a *femme coquette*, with no rights in law to her property, no right of access to her child, no hope of divorce.

Her professional novel *Una donna* does not deal only with her own life but draws attention to the generally inequitable position of married women in Italy at the turn of the century - hence the comparison with *A Doll's House*. Your reviewer refuses to allow the book any literary merit, even claiming that "contemporary critics immune to her personal charms condemned her work." This is an unnecessary slur on those who valued it, and fails to explain Pirandello's enthusiasm for *Una donna*, Emilio Cecchi's comparison of it to Carlo Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, the award of the Versilia Prize in 1948 to the selection of her poetry *Selva d'amore* or Montale's profoundly respectful obituary.

Aleramo's politics also get short shrift. Her own work in the Agro Romano schools, into which she put what proceeds came from *Una donna*, is glossed over. Her other period of intense political activity came at the end of her literary career and through involvement in the Italian Communist Party. While it is true that she made an obeisance to Fascism in 1933, and through the intervention of Queen Elena was granted a small state pension, d'Amico's implication that she was an active Fascist is not true. (It is interesting that in this context silence reigns over her husband's Fascism.) Nor was her accommodation with Fascism at all unusual: the history of intellectuals-by-profession under Fascism in Italy was in the main one of conformity.

Her pension came to an end in 1943, not 1945; a minor point, but it diminishes the impression that she left a sinking ship to climb on to a bandwagon. *Dal mio Diario 1940-44*, published in 1945, reflects her political thinking (although, as with most of her work, her emotional life takes precedence) and provides further evidence that she was not a committed Fascist.

D'Amico's statement that "few intellectuals were ready to commit themselves so completely to the (Communist) Party so soon after the war" is similarly absurd. It was precisely in these years, impressed by the Party's role in the Resistance, that many intellectuals (and others) were drawn into the ambit of the Party. Flourent testimony to this can be found in Pavese's essay "Communism and the Intellectuals," written in 1946 (the year Aleramo joined). Calvino worked on *L'Urdia*, Malaparte (who had been a real Fascist) contributed articles from 1944, Visconti began work on *La terra trema* with Communist Party money; the philosopher Galvano Della Volpe joined the Party around the same time. D'Amico's claim bears no historical weight.

In the 1970s the most recent wave of Italian feminism made *Una donna* once more a best seller. Since then she has been discovered as an exceptional diarist, and this talent no doubt contributes to making *Sibilla Aleramo e il suo tempo* such a "thoroughly entertaining" book. Her diaries are not available in translation. A *Woman* fortunately is. As its recent translator (the English and American editions referred to by d'Amico are not reprints, as he incorrectly states) I am glad that at least through this work Sibilla Aleramo can speak for herself.

ROSALIND DELMAR.

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Emily Dickinson

Sir, - The Emily Dickinson edition for which Evan Jones calls (Letters, May 14) - "a reader's edition" - making full use of Franklin's redaction, by an editor prepared to collate and to make rational decisions about punctuation, capitalization and, indeed, lineation" - already exists in typescript. Over the course of more than five years, Barbara Bronson, Richard von Kleinsmid and I have discussed our way poem by poem through the entire canon, collating and making those decisions. Most recently, we have brought the first half of our edition, the poems Dickinson herself re-copied into booklets, into conformity with Franklin's reconstructions.

The edition exists. Publication of it is stymied, however, by the fact that Harvard University Press controls the Dickinson copyrights.

The Todd-Higginson version of such poems as were originally published in the 1890s may be reprinted without permission or fee; Johnson's copy texts, as collected in the 1960 Little, Brown edition of the *Complete Poems*, are available to anthologists upon payment of a fee. None of these meet the need. The Todd-Higginson versions contain editorial substitutions, while proper attention to Dickinson's own variants (quite apart from punctuation, capitalization and lineation) reveals that poem after poem is better than the version of it which appears in Johnson's careless offshoot from his 1955 three-volume Harvard variorum. At best, Johnson did not attempt to meet the criteria for a reader's edition as envisaged by Evan Jones and numbers of others before him.

This is not the place to discuss the "rational decisions" that have had to be made. I want only to draw attention to the fact that they have already been made with great care and to indicate that we would welcome any constructive suggestions for overcoming the copyright difficulties. Neither Harvard nor Little, Brown has been helpful.

WILLIAM H. MATCHETT.
Department of English GN-30,
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Washington 98195.

'Macmillan Dictionary of Biography'

Sir, - William Haley reviewed (June 4) *The Macmillan Dictionary of Biography* by Barry Jones and M. V. Dixon. His review was very favourable but I as one of the ostensible co-authors I wish to dissociate myself from the book in every way. I think it lacks the fundamental prerequisite of any reference book, viz. accuracy. In a careful re-reading of the published text I have picked up at least 3,000 factual errors, quite apart from absurdities in the text and gross omissions. I have asked Macmillan to withdraw the book from sale in Britain. They have declined to do so but will now insert a disclaimer in each copy offered for sale. *The Macmillan Co. of Australia*, at my request, have declined to distribute the book in Australia or New Zealand.

The book has a curious history:

extending over twenty years. I never met my ostensible co-author Mr M. V. Dixon who died in 1967 (as the dust-cover points out). I had no contact whatever with the pseudonymous editors who revised my text. I was never sent galley proofs. The page proofs were appalling: I attempted a major correction and I only agreed to let the book be distributed on telephoned assurances that my corrections had been made.

Among the major omissions are the writers Saul Bellow, Yukio Mishima, Multatuli, Elias Canetti, Osip Mandelstam, György Lukács, Henry Green, C. V. Wedgwood, Roland Barthes, Hugh Trevor-Roper, A. J. F. Taylor, Fernand Braudel, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, S. J. Perelman, Anthony Burgess, Rebecca West, Jean Cocteau, Knut Hamsun, Friedrich Hölderlin, Malcolm Lowry, Antonio Gramsci, Isak Dinesen, Robert Musil, Robert Penn Warren, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Nikos Kazantzakis, B. F. Skinner and Jean Rhys.

The book abounds in absurdities. James Clerk Maxwell is in twice (under "C" and "M"), while Robert Kennedy appears three times.

The entry on Oswald, Lee Harvey, is a classic which contains more absurdities in a few lines than any other reference book known to me, although the entries on Edward VII and Edward VIII run Oswald very close.

Your distinguished reviewer was one of those dropped by the editors from my material.

BARRY O. JONES.

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St Albans, Victoria 3021, Australia.

'Time, Action and Necessity'

Sir, - I would like to make some comments on Galen Strawson's review of Nicolas Denyer's *Time, Action and Necessity* (May 21). Strawson's simple-sounding statement, "This lump of radioactive matter will emit an X-particle at noon tomorrow" is true now if and only if the lump does in fact emit an X-particle then, and that's all there is to it, is in fact simplistic and contains exactly the erroneous temporal syllogism that Denyer refutes. The matter is of more than academic interest because the problem occurs frequently in the design of Transistor-Transistor Logic circuits and Far-Field Scale Integration devices. The individual switches in these circuits can only exist in a strict binary state, that is, defined as 0, 1, + or - or true, false. Hence they represent a real physical model of the philosophical problem. Because of the ever-de-

creasing intervals of time between successive true-false operations, it is of crucial importance that Denyer's criterion be acknowledged.

In fact, if a truth test is applied to a predictive statement now at the moment the statement is made, Denyer is exactly correct. It is impossible to apply Strawson's retroactive judgment, yet it is necessary to make some estimate of what will happen. The estimate can range from a qualitative conjecture ("I'll meet you at Mirabelle at noon tomorrow") to a statistical estimate (the one-millionth polarity reversal of switch X will occur one nanosecond after the 999,999 thousandth switch reversal). Since it is not possible in any case to apply an event's determinism to future events, it is essential that we be aware of Denyer's distinction when projecting the level of statistical confidence. As electronic circuit design continues to demonstrate, one can not depend on hope or hindsight in these matters. They are equally ineffectual in a well-constructed system of logic.

MORTON GROSSER.

1016 Lemon Street, Menlo Park,
California 94025.

Sotheby's Sale

Sir, - While we were very grateful for the notice that Robert Hewison (Behind the Lines, June 18) gave to our sale on June 29 and 30, may I dispel a rumour to which he gives currency.

He says that Sotheby's is selling the manuscripts of entries to the Poetry Competition which it is sponsoring on behalf of the Arvon Foundation. There is no such intention of selling the entries.

What is going to happen is that a sale will be held early in 1983 which will make up, from donations of books (preferably inscribed or annotated) and letters and literary manuscripts and working notebooks by living and earlier authors. Donors can decide, in consultation with Sotheby's, what percentage, after commission and expenses, they want for themselves and what percentage they wish to go to the Arvon Foundation. Donations are already being received and others will be welcome.

Our altruism is unblemished.
R. L. DAVIDS.
Sotheby Parke Bernet & Co., 34-35 New Bond Street, London W1.

Counten Tenor, reviewed by Anthony Burgess in your issue of April 2 (Miss Killingley is herself presently engaged on valuable work both literary and scientific on the counter-tenor question, which I understand she plans to publish.)

When I set out to write my own book, I originally decided not to be drawn into the inevitable exchanges of fixed and entrenched opinions which would undoubtedly ensue on publication. So far there have been few, but I expect more. There will always be those who do not, or wish not to agree. But as Milo Keynes seems in at least one extremely important area totally to have misunderstood my point, I now write to underline what is actually stated clearly in the course of the book.

The counter-tenor seems to be a vocal faculty of three. High counter-tenors use only head voice; the expertly developed falsetto. But "falsetto" is a mischievous misnomer. This quite natural mechanism produces two distinct divisions - "upper" and "middle" or pharyngeal. Most high counter-tenors normally use both. Low counter-tenors work in "middle" falsetto plus upper chest voice or register. These singers are either like John Whitworth (whose name was misprinted in the Burgess review) and Hughes Cuénil, pharyngeal voice specialists with a baritone chest voice, or, extremely rarely, a tenor alto like Russell Oberlin whose light - amazingly light - lyric tenor at its top nevertheless uses much the same mechanism. The human larynx produces few natural tenors, never mind abnormally high ones.

So rare in fact are tenor altini that it seems utterly ridiculous to suggest by implication that the whole counter-tenor "counter-tenor" alto - male-voice population in Europe, say before the eighteenth century, comprised tenor altini exclusively. Varied archives show choral foundations to include roughly twice the number of counter-tenors to tenors and basses, particularly in England.

PETER GILES.
The Lay Clerks' Vestry, Canterbury Cathedral, Canterbury, Kent.

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The roses of Detroit

Jay Parini

PHILIP LEVINE

One for the Rose
79pp. Atheneum. \$10.95.
0 689 11224 6

DONALD FINKEL

What Manner of Beast
62pp. Atheneum. \$12.95.
0 689 11226 2

FREDERICK MORGAN

Northbook
75pp. University of Illinois Press.
\$11.95.
0 252 00947 9

One for the Rose is Philip Levine's tenth book of poems, and bears his unmistakable stamp. Levine is America's pre-eminent poet of the working class, and his personae dwell among factories, cheap rented housing, polluted landscapes, and the ordinary objects of daily life. Although he has written brilliantly about Spain and the Spanish Civil War, his main subject has been his home town, Detroit, in a sense, Levine has invented Detroit for the poetry-reading public. Making his own life an exemplum of common, unheroic experience, he writes:

'Fould have been drifting among the reeds of a clear stream like the little Moses, to be found by a Jewish hero. Instead I was born in the wrong year and in the wrong place, and I make my way so slowly and badly that I remember every single turn, and each one smells like an overblown rose.

yellow, American, beautiful, and true.' His manner is casual, fluent, and colloquial, mixing urban grit with a lyricism that tends to celebrate whatever comes into view. Levine typically combines harsh realism of description with spirituality, moving among his ordinary objects and characters with his feet in the mud but his head aloft.

Levine's short, flat lines and swifly

running enjambment give the unwary reader the illusion that he is reading prose chopped up arbitrarily into verse. This accusation holds true of his less good poems; the successes are dazzling and frequent. In "Roofs" for instance, Levine offers his version of Frost's famous "Birches". His boy climbs city roofs instead of trees:

As a child I climbed the roof and sat alone looking down at my own back yard, no longer the same familiar garden. I thought of flying, of spreading my arms and pushing off, but when I did I was back to earth in no time, but now with a broken hand that broke the fall.

His hand bandaged, he climbs back up again, "starting over the orderly roofs". He has learned "something essential / about all that was to come": for one thing, he has learned that clouds are clouds, not "faces, animals, or portents". He has also discovered (pace Heraclitus) that "The way down / was just like the way up, one / foot following another until / both were firmly on the ground." And, quite unlike Frost, he considers the sky his "only proper element". In this poem as in most others in *One for the Rose*, Levine risks sentiment, if not sentimentality, but the risk pays off.

Donald Finkel is of the same generation as Levine and *What Manner of Beast* is his tenth book as well. While he lacks Levine's originality, he has qualities of wit and enthusiasm that are missing in his contemporary. Finkel has for some time been developing a technique of collage which combines the use of quotations (or "found poems") with his own stylistic lyrics. He depends heavily on resurrected voices, historical personae whose commentaries form the main narrative. This method is brought to bear in *What Manner of Beast*, an amusing sequence of connected poems which relies on a bizarre miscellany of sources, including *Lo's Account of Martin Frobisher's First Voyage to the Arctic*, Hakluyt's *The English Voyage*, and Itard's *The Wild Boy of Aveyron*. Finkel's subject is always the rift between language and perception,

which he explores by playing one beast off against another – man against man, man against monkey, dolphin, and so on. Life world is strangely animate; even "the stones are humming / the crickets trip the light / the trees applaud."

Too many poets these days rely on the trick of "working up" history into poems. While Finkel has certainly scrambled for sources, he has not sacrificed his own imagination to fact. Indeed, his language gently parodies his sources, which more often than not sound clinically insane: "To provide social contact, it was first decided that an orangutan, Bilj, would live in the language-training situation with Lana", writes Duane Rumbaugh in *Language Learning by a Chimpanzee*. Finkel's very funny poem ends with an ape "clapped in her plastic cage, tapping out / telegrams to the remote / elusive genius of the machine".

Likewise, in the title poem, Finkel portrays chimpanzees "signing" to each other, sending messages. Getting caught up in the act itself, the narrator says: "in a week there are two of you / signing and hugging / hugging and signing". In short, Finkel plays loose with his sources, making fun of the pseudo-scientific detachment and clinical periphrasis that clings to a great deal of psychological and anthropological writing, and has written a clever, inventive exploration of man and beast in nature.

Northbook is Frederick Morgan's fourth collection. Before his first came out in 1972, he was known mainly as a distinguished editor of the *Hudson Review*; since then he has rapidly established himself as a poet whose sane, civilized voice is both welcome and necessary. He is also an ambitious poet, taking on the whole pantheon of Norse gods and goddesses in this new volume, sometimes with a sly smile; thus, in "Thor":

You have a big hammer to solve all your problems with. Effective to a point, but not always apt.

When the time comes for making fine discriminations, you head for the hills with the thing on your back, looking for giants whose heads you can pound.

The style of this poem – straightforward, gently ironic, somewhat impish – is sustained through the entire Norse sequence; one also discovers here the fierce simplicity found in classical Chinese poetry, as in "Ran":

Severe lady, your nets are out. There are few whom I would bid you spare.

Morgan achieves his terse, gnomic effects through a calculated reticence. His re-creation of Balder is especially good: "You were too beautiful to go on living", he says, "too much a being of joy / for the present tense of the world". Balder – son of Odin and god of the summer sun – was slain by his demon-possessed brother; but he will return again, after "this age of iron / endures its last unravelings". He will come back, leading his "dark blind brother by the hand", discovering a golden age wherein the new Adam and the new Eve,

walk out once more into the sun – and laugh to find, in moist green grass beneath a sky immaculate of pain, the ancient golden chessmen of the gods.

The death of doves

Tim Dooley

GEORGE SZIRTES

November and May
64pp. Secker and Warburg. \$4.50.
0 436 50598 9

George Szirtes's first collection, *The Silent Door*, opened with a poem about the naive Yugoslav painter Generalo and contained another called "Sanc Des Independants"; such pieces "not only signal what marks off Szirtes from his British contemporaries – his natural recourse to analogies from painting rather than from literature – but also offer clues to his particular qualities as a writer. The effect Generalo produces by his representation of the human figure does not differ significantly from that of a painter like Légar. The difference between the two is the difference between an artist who breaks the conventions of realist representation in a knowing way and one who does it innocently.

It is tempting to see a parallel here with Szirtes's own position. The disruptions of expectation and the unusual visual intensity in his poems might suggest a common strategy with the poets of the Marlian school, but he is unlike them in that it is difficult to detect in his work a systematic interest in pursuing a particular aesthetic method. The quirks and surprises in Szirtes's poems are not the result of originality of manner, but of originality of vision, something which qualifies him to exhibit his work among the true "Independents" and which makes his new book *November and May* unusually arresting.

The power of the imagination to create alternative versions of reality is referred to directly in several of these poems. A short piece, "Piano", pays tribute to the musician the ability of art to transform daily life, but concludes by demonstrating how art is itself dependent on the daily banalities:

Up, and down, gliding, vague and searching without knowing it, turning things over, in a fumble fashion. Whoever is playing there might be transmitting fire for all we know.

Two major sequences of poems in this collection, "Miserere" and "The Dialectic Table", are grouped under titles which suggest artistic exercises or indulgences. While these poems allow Szirtes to exercise his

This approximate blank verse – simple, sensuous, controlled – shows Morgan at his best.

Three miscellaneous sections of uneven quality follow the Norse sequence; nevertheless, Morgan's language often catches fire as suddenly "life's daily plainness / shifts and discovers to the darkening view". These sections yield, finally, to a long poem called "The River"; the piece is spare, evocative, and lyrical. The same reticence that marked the best poems of the Norse sequence is present throughout; the poem begins:

A fresh June morning your dress flung across the chair- and birds awakening, released from the book of night Here it is, the Day like none other from the world's beginning

and all we have is in it: I read you again and again. While the river is, of course, a river, it is also time, the body moving through time, the flow of thought and feeling. Morgan – chronicles – two lovers' responses to each other and to the world with considerable grace and restraint; "The River" brings *Northbook* to a close on its purest note.

taste and talent for verbal and visual puns (Brimstone Yellow butterflies are described as "on wires out of sheer hell, with a brief sputter / like fat in a pan, yellow indeed as butter", while an artichoke becomes "the great Globe itself") this is not done at the expense of the poems' subjects, for which Szirtes communicates a mixture of affection and awe. He retains a painter's sense of the importance of attending to externals, so as to represent the world honestly, but also so as to understand it, and himself, more thoroughly – a point made emphatically in "Girl Dressing Herself". Here, a loving and minute examination of the room a girl has left behind her going out to work ends with this stanza:

Room and girl, fellow conspirators, wait for each other at both ends of day, their patience is unbroken. I try to carve them from imagination: the bed, the stool, the skirt, the light; trusting to the weather of their eternal and impenetrable country of which I too am a citizen, or will grow to be.

Thus Szirtes leads the reader from the mysteries of art back to the problem of life, a puzzle that the foreign language of poetry repeatedly fails to explain.

Typically, Szirtes is more interested in evoking the sadness involved in attempting to explain than in offering explanations. This is demonstrated in the strangest and most menacing of the poems in *November and May*, the semi-narrative "The Birdcatchers". The opening stanza's precise use of dates, names and geographical detail gives to the poem a documentary tone oddly out of key with the fiction that follows. Three nineteenth-century French shepherds believe they have witnessed a new incarnation, in a stable, "Exactly as in the Bible story". They decide to return the next night to check whether what they think they have seen can in fact be true. On the way, one of the shepherds hears what he takes to be roosting wood-pigeons and suggests that if they could capture enough to make a pigeon-pie:

It would be a suitable present for The new-born God, supposing he exists And we are not all touched with August madness.

The remaining two-thirds of the poem is dominated by a painful and detailed description of the clubbing to death of the birds, which turn out to be doves, and the reactions of the shepherds who, seeing the carnage for which they are responsible, return home with no further reference to their original quest. "In a mood of deep tranquillity" The moral dimension of the tale is left to the reader to state for himself. The result is an extraordinarily haunting piece of writing which stands out even in its finely written book as this, as a work of "unusual integrity and authority."

Pastness in the present

S. C. Humphreys

M. I. FINLEY

Economy and Society in Ancient Greece
Edited by Brent D. Shaw and Richard P. Saller
326pp. Chatto and Windus. £15.
0 7011 2549 7

Sir Moses Finley has dominated the study of the social and economic history of archaic and classical Greece for thirty years. Not only has he exerted a decisive influence in the West, most recently documented in the first issue of the new journal *Opa. International Journal for Social and Economic History of Antiquity* (Rome, 1982); he has also, through the work on slavery and other forms of dependent labour which is collected in the second section of the book under review, made a highly significant impact on Marxist studies of the ancient world in Eastern Europe. This collection of papers has a useful introduction to Finley's work by the editors, both of whom came under his influence at Cambridge, and a bibliography of his more important publications; it contains, besides the pieces on slavery, three early articles on Homer and Mycenae, and five more recent ones grouped under the heading "The Ancient City". The Ancient City, from Rustel de Coulanges to Max Weber and beyond: "Sparta", "The Athenian Empire", "Land, Debt and the Man of Property", "The Freedom of the Citizen in the Greek world". A substantial collection, even if it by no means represents the full range of Finley's interests; I hope it will soon be made available in paperback for the benefit of students.

The title of the book, and the opening essay on the Ancient City, suggest a comparison between Finley's work and that of another great social and economic historian of antiquity in this century, Michael Rostovtzeff – who concentrated his attention on the Hellenistic period and the Roman Empire. Both were strongly influenced by Max Weber, but in different ways. Rostovtzeff took his questions from Weber – the relation of city to countryside, the reasons for the decline of ancient civilization – and set out to marshal the new evidence available in increasing quantities from archaeology, papyri and inscriptions in support of answers influenced by his Russian experience. In his book, immense quantities of data are organized round a diachronic model of the historical changes developing through the centuries. Finley, as the editors of this volume point out in their introduction, was influenced not only by Weber's substantive analyses of ancient institutions but also by his views on historical method. Besides studying Weber, he worked for a time with Karl Polanyi, whose comparative economics was based on the use of ideal types, and was also closely associated with the sociologists of the Frankfurt school in New York, whose central concern was to reconcile a Marxist critique of contemporary society with the philosophical sophistication of Weber's views on the methods and epistemology of the social sciences.

The fruits of insularity

A. M. Snodgrass

COLIN RENFREW and MALCOLM WAGSTAFF (Editors)

An Island Polity: The archaeology of exploitation in Melos
361pp. Cambridge University Press.
£35.
0 521 23785 8

This volume will give many readers (professional prehistorians apart) their first sight of the New Face of Archaeology in Greece. Rumours of a revolution in archaeological approach will certainly have reached some classicists, historians and interested laymen before now – even the fieldwork described here was completed by 1976 – but this book places the consequences directly in their path. To resume the initial metaphor, the face (although on close inspection far from pale) turns out to be interesting rather than merely beautiful: its chief attraction lies less in surface charm than in the rewarding personality behind it. By this I do not mean to criticize the production of the book, which is finely done: over two hundred plates, maps, tables and diagrams are matched with a well-printed text, enriched by generous use of sites and place-names of the island of Melos, and by a complete translation of the famous "Melian Dialogue" from the fifth book of Thucydides. The point is rather that, for a fruitful reading of the text, the traditionally minded reader will have to change some of his preconceptions about the language and approach hitherto accepted in this subject-area; but it is high time that he did so, and he will find the experience well worth while.

What took the fourteen co-authors of this book to Melos was not a desire to put flesh on the bones of Thucydides' text, nor the urge to interpret and add to the works of ancient art which the soil of Melos has produced, nor the beauties of the island (my eyes very limited), nor even the fact that it contains a noted prehistoric site. Phylakopi, first

excavated by a British expedition in 1896. Their aims were not so particularized; indeed, they did not even intend to follow the well-tried practice of making inductive inferences from the case of one particular island to a wider spectrum of early cultures. Instead, they looked to Melos as a test-case for certain specific assumptions about the nature of past change, even hoping for "the establishment of soundly based assumptions for predicting the future" – no less. They chose an island because islands are, for the theoretical archaeologist, the nearest approach to a natural laboratory, with their intractable marine frontiers, their circumscribed resources, their clear polarity of isolation and communication: in Auden's lines, "What is cosier than the shore / Of a lake turned inside out?"

They chose a Greek island because there one can find documented episodes, spread over several thousand years, in the history of the same natural feature, with the added bonus that Melos was, for perhaps something approaching a quarter of its inhabited life, actually an independent polity – a large enough fraction, on balance, to justify the choice of the book's title.

The book is divided into four main sections: The history of society in Melos; Environmental system and constraints; Intra-systemic relations; Inter-systemic relations: with a final section of Integration. A striking feature is the interpenetration of tone and method which is achieved (for which a fifteenth collaborator credited with the "major editorial role", Todd Whitelaw, must be in large part responsible). But Malcolm Wagstaff's contributions throughout are conspicuous for their industry, learning and level-headedness. John Cherry's for their clarity and candour, Colin Renfrew's for their combination of originality with skill in synthesizing his colleagues' findings; while Olive Gamble lends the enterprise a welcome touch of humour in the course of an enlightening chapter on the relationship between the human and domestic animal populations. Taken as a whole, the book seems to me an admirable presentation of the findings

of the expedition's fieldwork: it is to that fieldwork itself that criticisms will be largely confined here, though the grounds for most of them are candidly acknowledged in advance by the authors.

A climax in the history of the island, and a central point in the argumentation of the book, is reached when Phylakopi emerges, towards the end of the Middle Bronze Age, not merely as the dominant settlement on the island but, at least for the next two centuries (c. 1600–1400 BC), as the only inhabited site in Melos. What is the basis for this remarkable finding? The question is important because two later inferences are in turn based on this: first, since there is a correlation between "a large, prime, 'gateway town'" and colonial exploitation, the concentration of people in Phylakopi is taken to strengthen the case for thinking that Melos was a colony of Minoan Crete at this time; secondly, since Melos is an island some twenty kilometres long, the same phenomenon is thought to imply "more travel by farmers than some modern theorists would consider economically appropriate". This latter point raises an issue of wide repercussions, since the unspecified modern theorists are the exponents of Site Catchment Analysis, a technique which has had a powerful impact in recent years on archaeology and other disciplines.

So how well founded is the case for believing that the whole population of the island was concentrated in Phylakopi? For the answer, we must turn to John Cherry's account of the Melos site survey of 1976, the most important chapter in the book. The survey was confined, as it had to be, to a sample of the island's territory amounting to 20 per cent of the total (though about fifty archaeological sites were already known on the island, some lying within and some outside the 1976 sample areas). The location of the samples was determined by a "systematic random design" which produced four evenly spaced dog-leg strips, a kilometre wide, running from north to south. Cherry argues with force and honesty for the advantages

It would, however, be quite wrong to give the impression that his work is all models and theoretical polemic. He has an extremely sharp eye for historical detail and, in particular, for the details which help us to understand how institutions actually worked. (Shaw and Saller, in their introduction, attribute this interest in operational questions to Finley's "Anglo-American roots with their element of pragmatic empiricism", but in the interview with Francois Hartog referred to below Finley himself ascribes it to the influence of Polanyi.) That his use of detailed evidence is economical, reduced to the minimum necessary for effective argument, should not (though it sometimes does) mislead critics into considering him under-informed in comparison with those who work in a superficially more Rostovtzeffian style. Finley has a remarkable capacity for digesting a mass of detail and reducing it to a clear and clean-cut argument.

Chapters twelve and thirteen, "Mycenaean Palace Archives and Economic History" and "Homer and Mycenae: property and tenure", provide an excellent example. These articles were published in 1956–7, just after the publication of the Linear B tablets from Knossos, Mycenae and Pylos which Ventris and Chadwick had deciphered as Greek in 1952. Since the Homeric poems claimed to celebrate the deeds of the rich and powerful heroes of the Bronze Age, and contained descriptions of objects found in Mycenaean but not in later archaeological contexts, scholars had since 1952 been rushing to identify Homeric features in the tablets. Finley's demonstration that in the sphere of social organization the two have almost nothing in common is a *tour de force*, one of those reinterpretations of evidence which immediately carry conviction because of the lucidity and validity of the

reasoning – once the case is stated – make the conclusion seem obvious. The argument is negative – in the sense of contradicting a currently held view – theoretically sophisticated, yet also extremely concrete.

In view of what I have been saying, any attempt to single out what is most characteristic in Finley's work is bound to be risky. Francois Hartog, the editor of a recent French collection of Finley's essays (*Mythe, mémoire, histoire: les sagesses du passé*, Flammarion, 1981), realizing that all his work is a conversation with the reader, instead of writing an introduction, concluded the volume with an interview in which he questioned Finley on his ideas about the current and prospective role in our society of the study of ancient history. In that interview, Finley quotes from his own essay "Desperately Foreign" (published in *Aspects of Antiquity*, 1972). "All art is a dialogue. So is all interest in the past . . . The more precisely we listen, and the more we become aware of its pastness, even of its near-inaccessibility, the more meaningful the dialogue becomes. In the end, it can only be a dialogue in the present, about the present." It is this sense of the Greek past as a living constituent of the present, a partner in an ongoing dialogue conducted in a conversational tone ("In all hitherto existing societies, ever since the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, rights have clashed"), which seems to me Finley's hallmark. *The Legacy of Greece* on which the reader is invited to reflect in the new volume edited by Finley, is not Warburgian "classical tradition" for which Oliver Taplin was looking in his review (*TLS*, April 30) but a set of cultural categories: "myth", "politics", "drama", "history". It is because in so many instances we still perceive the world through a cultural grid inherited from the Greeks that dialogue with the Greeks is an essential part of any critical theory.

of such a design; he cites, among many other authorities, an important paper by those suggestively-named American experts Plog, Plog and Wait, but he was apparently unmoved by one of their most important conclusions, which was that "really stratified samples provide statistically more precise estimates of population parameters than either random or systematic samples"; and again that "to rely blindly on probability sampling reflects an . . . unjustified refusal to assess and take into account pre-existing information". In other words, there are alternative ways of choosing a 20 per cent sample of a territory which, in some cases at least, give a more reliable picture of the whole. In this instance, too, I feel that by surveying a carefully chosen chunk of Melos, preferably in one place, the authors would either have had more success in convincing us that there were no other sites of this period in the 80 per cent of the island that they did not cover; or, more likely, that they would have found such sites.

A second weakness of the field-work was that the team found itself unable to identify reliably the ceramic material of post-Roman date, so that about the last third of Melos inhabited history is left largely undocumented archaeologically. The shortcoming throws another burden, that of interpreting almost the whole later history of the island, on to the shoulders of Malcolm Wagstaff; outstandingly well as he has discharged the roles of geographer, historian and social anthropologist which he undertook, one does feel that he was asked to do too much. A professional sociologist, for example, would have found it easier to identify those moments during the in-depth interviews of present-day farmers when they were not actually telling the truth (and the reasons why). Although there are other passages in the book which can be criticized – such as the occasional over-reliance on "flimsy pieces of evidence" like the alleged Melian colony at Kyraos in Asia Minor – I prefer to end on a note of sincere appreciation. The abiding impression left on the reader, and reinforced by chapter after chapter of

Moving Indoors

It is time to move indoors, to gather up papers and books and cigarettes and beer: and balancing them all in one hand, grip the doorknob with the other, push the door open, put down my load and once more step outside and try to fold up the deckchair a little dappily by now sitting, here once I turned my heartbeats into one brief dance.

"You are bringing my house down!" I was proud of that, its bright echoes of music-hall setting off many darker thoughts I had of walking out on home life, work and all responsibilities for one loud need and I was ready with an answering call – but it is time to move indoors, and I gather up my frustrations with a sigh.

It may be just as well the house still stands after the storm, after the holiday, the table in the square, the wild romance that might have been had she not gone away for far too much was asked upon the chance that we would live to see another day without the decor and beyond the Alps where all being equal, every little helps.

I tread once more these tidy northern streets and window after window shows a room where a girl plays an instrument or meets her lover, or a lady if at home – for it is time to move indoors, where fates are more securely sealed, as in my doom who courted Titian but who find Vermeer easier to live with in this cooler air.

So much to do this autumn! Where to start? It will be difficult to fit it in, who are together now, who are apart, who has a show, a concert, where and when – and as a film of ice forms on the heart left out by accident, we learn again to close the windows and to hear the house tick by, for it is time to move indoors.

Keith Bosley

From prose to picture

William Weaver

EDWARD HODNETT

Image and Text Studies in the Illustration of English Literature
271pp. Scholar Press. £17.50.
0 85967 603 X

Some of Edward Hodnett's turns of phrase almost demand the services of an illustrator. "The Hammer-Hayman record is a sort of science-fiction telephoto time lens," he says, presumably with W. Heath Robinson in mind; while his "time-short, problem-orientated moderns" would seem to be related to the desk-bound folk of Frank Dickens's "Bristow". But are such phrases suitable for illustration? Should the artist be allowed to pick and choose at will, or should he confine himself to crucial incidents only?

Book illustration, Dr Hodnett maintains, is a difficult and mysterious business, not least because "no depth studies seem to have been made which would provide the information we would like to have about what readers of an illustrated book think and feel as they read the text and look at the pictures". He is wary of specialist criticism since "in the long run it is the response of the general reader which determines the success of a book". Bumbling along, Hodnett reaches a preliminary conclusion: "A well-planned survey should carry a qualified person or team a grant-in-aid adequate to gather enough reasonably dependable data to provide insight into the nature of reader response and to set up hypotheses to guide further investigation."

Having recommended that all students of book illustration should first learn to draw, the author proceeds to indicate some of the major "critical hazards". For example, "It is easy to make mistakes" in choosing illustrations. Turning pages carelessly can lead to overlooking cuts, and wandering attention can cause miscounts. "A special hazard is the imperfect book."

These studies include chapters on books published by John Day in the sixteenth century, on illustrations of Shakespeare, on Blake, Burne-Jones and Beardsley. A distinction is made between luxury or "uncommercial" publications, such as the Kelmscott Chaucer, and those intended to appeal to the "general reader". Tennyson, working to satisfy the Rev. C. L. Dodgson's demands, and Hablot K. Browne ("Phiz"), working obediently to the status of artist-illustrator employed by Burne-Jones and, to a lesser extent, Aubrey Beardsley. Phiz became Dickens's preferred illustrator because, unlike George Cruikshank, he lacked ideas of his own. Dickens dispensed with Cruikshank for a number of reasons after *Oliver Twist* but the chief of these was that, understandably enough, he could not tolerate the relationship of poet to text that Cruikshank, harking back to his days collaborating with his brother Robert and with Pierce Egan on *Life in London*, took for granted. To Cruikshank, etchings and blocks were obviously a more costly and valuable investment for the publisher than any amount of telephoto. Good illustrators and wood-engravers were in shorter supply than writers. Besides, Cruikshank was famous, the leading name on the title page, long before Dickens took up his pen and became "Phiz".

Dr Hodnett bypasses Cruikshank in favour of Phiz, maybe, rightly so, considering that the way Dickens used Phiz represents a model partnership of sorts: the artist as tool of the author. Phiz provided designs that, month by month, set the scenes and reflected the text. The Phiz style—one of parody, caricature and implicit exaggeration—evolved in accordance with Dickens's needs. He managed, in *Black House*, a convincing line in gloom and horror. But this sort of illustration was essentially journalistic. While the political cartoonists—Leach and later Tenniel—prepared the weekly "big cut" for *Punch*, while the engravers laboured in teams to meet the deadline for each edition of the *Illustrated*

London News, Phiz endeavoured to put Dickens across, to secure the success of each serial publication by parading the characters and their successive predicaments.

Tenniel's contribution to *Alice* was that of the trained observer. He was responsible for showing what a Gryphon looked like; he put flesh on Tweedledum and Tweedledee. They remain not so much as Carroll describes them but as Tenniel depicted them: a pair of paunchy schoolboys. Here, "With absolute finality," Hodnett argues, the illustrator plays his part, creating images recalled by readers "so vividly they often think that all Tenniel's designs are equally effective". In this they are mistaken, however, for all too often, in Hodnett's view, the artist fails to pick the right moment or becomes wilfully inaccurate. "In the first of the three illustrations of 'The Walrus and the Carpenter' the two are supposed to be walking by the light of the moon and the sun and to be crying because of the quantities of sand, but there is very little sand and no sun and moon."

Hodnett sounds like Alice herself, the prosaic child complaining whenever anyone loses sight of the facts. He naturally becomes even more exasperated with Burne-Jones for straying from the text and takes Beardsley to task for failing, in *Morte D'Arthur*, even to be as medieval in spirit as Burne-Jones. He also has rather harsh things to say about his formal technique. Of "How Sir Bedivere Cast the Sword Excalibur into the Water" he remarks "Except for the unconvincing solid black surrounding the water, it is an unskillful realistic drawing". The design is, admittedly, a hotch-potch, but that's no reason for entangling it in verbiage.

The trouble is that, because Hodnett

considers "we cannot presume to judge a book illustrator's work on a like or don't-like basis", he often finds himself with little to say. He therefore makes a point of questioning, at length, the choice of what to illustrate. While suggesting, reasonably enough, that John Martin began his series of mezzotint illustrations to *Paradise Lost* in 1824 with favourite scenes involving Satan and the architectural wonders of Pandemonium, he expresses pedantic surprise about some of Martin's decisions when it comes to the Temptation and the Fall. He concerns himself with what he calls "an imaginary scenario of this photoplay" rather than with Martin's exploitation of the special qualities of mezzotint, the rich blacks, the soft whites, the fine velvety greys, thereby making the whole series a dioramic experience, passing from dark to light and back into darkness.

Unlike Beardsley, who blatantly had no feeling for Malory, or Burne-Jones, who treated Chaucer as stained-glass window material, Martin had the technique and the imagination to be Miltonic. Hodnett talks of "the magnificence and unexpectedness of these large plates" but, all too conscious of the need to avoid likes and don't-likes, he leaves it to his readers—"general" or otherwise, he doesn't specify—"to review their notes and impressions and arrive at their own conclusions on how satisfactorily John Martin's 'Paradise Lost' interprets John Milton's".

This may go down well in the seminar but it's a clumsy way of avoiding issues. Good illustration, like good criticism, involves flavouring description with appreciation. Good illustrators, like good stage directors, enhance the text. Illustration is a response designed to be shared.



Gustave Doré's "The Ancient Mariner leaves the Wedding Guest and continues his Wandering", one of the forty-two illustrations to the 1875 edition of Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* reproduced from *The World of the English Romantic Poets* by John Purkis (190pp. Heinemann Educational, £12.50, 0 435 18735 X). Once the Ancient Mariner reaches land, his wanderings appear to continue in medieval France.

From poseur to pundit

Norman Bryson

ROBERT SNELL

Théophile Gautier: A Romantic Critique of the Visual Arts
273pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press.
0 19 815768 1

For us it is Baudelaire who towers over art criticism in mid-nineteenth-century France, but for the French reading public of the period, and even for Baudelaire himself, it was Théophile Gautier. By the time of his death in 1852, his name had come almost to stand for the function of art criticism itself. Certainly there were critics who were more erudite, and for a scholarly or expert opinion the public might look to Gustave Planche. There were critics who more dramatically altered contemporary taste, and nothing in Gautier can match the sustained persuasiveness of Théophile Thoré's *Les Muses de la Hollande*, which "discovered" Vermeer. But for art criticism that spoke from the whole sensibility and not simply from a professional competence, and for a response to painting which embodied in itself the energy and authority of the Romantic generation, it was to Gautier that people turned.

They read Gautier as a matter of course, in the newspapers. When Baudelaire embarked on his own criticism in 1845 he stood outside the framework of the professional reviews—he needed to feel like an outsider to sound like himself. If this strategy worked with his contemporaries, it succeeded doubly with posterity. Baudelaire aimed at classic status, and he achieved it. Gautier wrote in the full expectation that his writings would never be assembled. His prose was never disposable. From one point of view, to treat Gautier as a systematic art critic and to gather together his ephemeral performances in order to find their inner order, as Robert Snell has done, is to destroy their whole essence. Yet what emerges from the experiment is a Gautier far more interesting than the Gautier of one's preconceptions, the gaudy Romantic

with his permanently long hair, red waistcoat and yellow babouches, author of *Enfance et Camille*, and high priest in the rite of *Art pour l'art*.

Of course Gautier remains these things. The point is that he remained them for so long. His early criticism was continuous with the rebellion of the late 1820s, and the dandyish persona was backed by events: the scandal of Delacroix's "La Mort de Sardanapale", the battle of the *flamboyants* against the *grisettes*, the first night of *Hernani*. In the 1830s the rebellion subsided; but Gautier remained much the same. After the success of *Mademoiselle de Maupin* in 1833 the persona came vaguely unstuck from its background, became a more generalized manner of celebrity. In 1836 he began his career in journalism at exactly the moment when, under the new constitution of the press, the mass circulation of newspapers became the most visible art critic in France, a position he largely retained until his death. In the Second Empire he made a sort of national representative of the arts. He was commissioned to produce a deluxe history of Russian art, to celebrate the entente between Louis-Napoléon and Alexander II. He was forever being despatched on military and scientific expeditions abroad, from which he dutifully returned his dazzling columns for the newspaper-reading public. For us, Gautier may be a precursor of *A Rebours*, but to his contemporaries he was a newspaper star, an institution whose reliability had been tested by several generations: less like a Degas or a Manet, more like an Art Buchwald, or an Alistair Cooke.

The complexity, and the delicacy, of Gautier's position becomes clear when, as we follow Snell's account, we see his art criticism in its journalistic context. Gautier looks to the power of art to transport the perceiver out of the present, to dislocate the mind from the assurances and stabilities of polite culture. His reaction centres on the moment of bliss when the transport begins in earnest, and prose is the means to prolong and intensify the dislocation. It is hardly matters what category of art induces the mood of reverie and escape, as long as that mood is intense. A Manet will

certainly do the trick, but a minutely detailed interior, a Meissonier with no exoticism at all, may serve just as well.

The irony is that the mass circulation newspapers in which Gautier consolidated his reputation were already catering to a public in whom the taste for escapism was well advanced. Travels, tales of the exotic, of bizarre suicides, of unusual murders, the bric-a-brac of advertisements, the sensationalism, and (crucially) the serialized novel, all these fed the bourgeois reader with a surrogate existence through imagination, against which background Gautier's aestheticism was curiously at home. The newspaper linked domesticity to its strange antithesis, infinite mental travel. The high Romanticism of the generation that had attended the first night of *Hernani* might almost have been designed to decline into a smug

domestic escapism where instruction and exotic entertainment lay column by column and side by side. Gautier's aestheticism repeated on a higher plane—at times not much higher—the mental excitements of the armchair traveller.

Gautier's life is a tragedy, or tragedy-comedy, of "recuperation". What Snell admirably brings out is the pathos of an avant-garde which becomes, not because it has changed but because the world has, an official culture. Gautier's art criticism has suffered for too long from the prejudiced expectation that in it one will find only an inhuman gaze, surveying the gallery across a chilly optical interval. Snell destroys this cliché and gives us a much more engaging figure: the priest of art as man in the world. This is an excellent intellectual biography, and portrays Gautier with more historical and human understanding than has been extended to him in years.

Istanbul style

Robin Cormack

YANNI PETSPOPOULOS (Editor)

Tulips, Arabesques and Turbans: Decorative Arts from the Ottoman Empire
224pp. London: Alexandria Press, Distributed by Sotheby Publications, £19.95
0 85667 151 7

Six years ago the World of Islam Festival opened the eyes of many to the nature of Islamic art with a set of exhibitions in London. No doubt the need of the organizers to select material for display, as well as the personal taste of the individual, must have meant that no visitor would have been able to develop an equally clear focus of all the periods presented. *Tulips, Arabesques and Turbans* marks a major step forward in the field. Unlike the Arts of Islam exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in 1976, this book (which functioned also as catalogue to an exhibition at Leighton House) establishes the character of just one period of Islamic art. Most of the

objects in it date from the sixteenth century, and from them the reader can appreciate the beauty and the sophistication of the art produced either directly for the Ottoman court of Istanbul or under its influence. In a group of scholarly essays that society, its metalwork, ceramics, textiles, calligraphy and painting are concisely introduced with reference to current literature and also to important new research by the authors. The editor, Yanni Petropoulos, is to be congratulated for achieving the best colour reproductions of works of art that I have ever seen (printed in Singapore). The photographs of tiles, dishes and metal vessels are (at the least) as superb as the objects themselves.

Christine Mitchell Havelock's *Hellenistic Art* (283pp. W. W. Norton, £14.25, 0 293 01400 2) is an introduction to Greek art produced in the period between the death of Alexander in 323 BC and the Battle of Actium in 31 BC. This revised second edition incorporates some recent research and has an updated bibliography. There are twenty plates and 177 photographs, all in black and white.

Into military channels

Norman Hampson

GEOFFREY BEST

War and Society in Revolutionary Europe, 1770-1870
36pp. Fontana, £2.95 (hardback, £12).
Leicester University Press.
0 00 634747 9

Any historian who attempts a subject like this is asking for trouble. He cannot hope to be equally familiar with all the trends of research over so long a period, in so many countries. If he produces a daring interpretation of his own, the specialists will trip him up with his own minor errors of detail or his outdated interpretations of this or that. If he plays safe he will be accused of merely telling us what we knew already and pinning a few military cockades on to a conventional political narrative. Geoffrey Best steers a middle course: he has a unifying theme, but it is not so inflexible or obtrusive as to drive the historical narrative out of the picture. Those who know little of the period will be able to follow; those who know more will find things to learn and ideas to challenge. If history is not to be a kind of scholasticism, where experts whisper to each other in footnotes, this is how it should be written: accurately, fluently, but without any claim to omniscience or pretence that the facts are speaking

for themselves. The book should provide even the lethargic with asking questions and it gives the information needed for questions to be sensible.

Broadly speaking, he argues that the end of the eighteenth century saw the collapse of a relatively static, hierarchical society, in which war was a controlled instrument of dynastic policy. New ideas and the emergence of new social forces substituted for this the concept of the nation, with its wars, first in America and then in Europe, where the old military restraints broke down. As wars became more popular they also became more "total". What this meant in terms of human misery is briefly but movingly conveyed. Eventually the more conservative states—or at least one of them, Prussia—were driven to imitate the French as the only way to defeat them. 1815 inaugurated a peaceful but not a pacific generation. The legacy of the Napoleonic wars was that war-weariness, in the sense that states were too exhausted to be ready to fight each other again, and nostalgia for the days of glory. A particular offshoot of this was the belief, in radical circles, that the "people", having lost the first round, might win the second, by means of political revolution and the adoption of guerrilla tactics. 1848 put paid to that.

During the next twenty years European societies came closer to the

aspirations of the men of 1789, in the sense that they became more urban, more economically developed and more "bourgeois". At the same time, the corrosive influence of militarism was subordinating liberalism to nationalism and turning nationalism into xenophobia. States became nations but only in the sense that rulers were able to attract or compel general participation in enterprises that the majority might endorse, but was as far as ever from controlling. This is, of course, an over-simplification, but not, I hope, a distortion of a more complex argument. The early part, in particular, is relatively familiar, which is perhaps why it is beginning to look a little old-fashioned.

There is no obvious connection between the revival of classical values in France, of which Rousseau was both the symbol and the cause, and any kind of "rise of the middle class". On the contrary, the social and economic theories of the Rousseauists were resolutely backward-looking. The question of how the revolutionaries came to abandon their initial pacific cosmopolitanism for a kind of crusading that came to look very much like imperialism, demands an answer, since part of Best's subsequent argument turns on whether this was inherent in revolutionary ideology from the start, or whether it was a product of European hostility. The growing tendency among historians of

the French revolution to treat ideology as an independent force in its own right, affects the way in which one thinks of the relationship between the revolution and Napoleon. The Napoleonic empire was "bourgeois" in the limited sense that the imposition of the Codes and the prospect of French service, in either a civil or a military capacity, offered opportunities that were not dependent on aristocratic status. In a subsequent chapter, Best concedes that a good many people outside France did benefit from the new arrangements, but he does not go into all the implications of this. Napoleon was both a liberator and an oppressor. It was he who wished Stein on Frederick William, and Spersky, the Russian reformer, was disliked by the nobility as the purveyor of French ideas. There is a case for saying that when Russia and, eventually, Prussia took up arms against Napoleon, their rulers' dependence on aristocratic army officers committed them to conservatism. When Alexander prepared to fight he began by dismissing Spersky, and York was a bitter opponent of the Prussian reformers.

"Nationalism", in other words, was two-faced; the French and Prussian varieties drew their inspiration from different sources, even if neither existed in a wholly pure state. In inspiration at least, the one was ideological; the other was more

xenophobic. To see 1813 as a year of German nationalism is perhaps an invention of later Prussian historians. Most Germans were content to turn with the tide and in Prussia itself popular enthusiasm was safely directed into military channels. This makes it easier to explain why conservatives found the going so easy after 1815.

These two strands of nationalism continued to co-exist and overlap in the nineteenth century. In 1848 Mazzini can be taken to personally the one and Engels, rather curiously, emerged as one of the spokesmen for the other, at least where German attitudes to the Slavs were concerned. Even within the limited space available, more might perhaps have been made of this. On the other hand, Best is very good indeed on the revolutionary underground during the generation after Waterloo, and its optimistic assumptions about the prospects for revolution and guerrilla warfare. He is perhaps inclined to anticipate when it comes to social conflicts—there was not much of a proletarian anywhere outside Great Britain in 1848—and to see concern for the safety of one's property (which might mean more to the relatively poor than to the rich) as proof of a ubiquitous class conflict, but this is the kind of subject on which opinions are bound to differ. One of his main objectives was presumably to set his readers arguing and in that, as in much else, he has certainly succeeded.

Imperialist test-beds

Geoffrey Scammell

FELIPE FERNÁNDEZ-ARMESTO

The Canary Islands After the Conquest: The Making of a Colonial Society in the Early Sixteenth Century
244pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £19.50.
0 19 821888 5

The Canary Islands, King Philip IV of Spain is alleged to have declared in 1643, were his most important possession. The document containing this seemingly bizarre statement can no longer be found, but the view was no fantasy. The islands are now chiefly known as a holiday resort and a port of call for cruises, where the tropical and exotic can be enjoyed in a recognizably European setting. Before the rise of such fashions the Canaries had endured centuries of poverty and obscurity. But there had once been a heretage. Known, and then forgotten by antiquity, the islands were rediscovered by Europeans in the early 1500s, and in the following century eventually, and with great difficulty, swarmed from their Guanche inhabitants by the Normans and the Spaniards. Together with the contemporary Portuguese discovery and colonization of Madeira and the Azores, this was the prelude to the European incursions into Asia and the Americas. Within a short time the Canaries, like the Portuguese Atlantic possessions, were brought into cultivation and became providers of producers of commodities—wheat, sugar, wine and the much-admired "Canary birds"—soon of considerable importance in that new and growing oceanic economy created by the

"the most wicked marching" in a vain search for loot. Meanwhile the Spanish government was endeavouring to reinforce and re-form its vital imperial outpost.

But the Atlantic islands, it has recently been argued by the eminent Belgian medievalist Charles Verlinden, had another significance in these years. He has drawn attention to the role of Mediterranean peoples in their discovery and exploitation, suggested that it was through the developed in the Levant was transplanted westwards, and indeed seen that the process of the settlement and development of the Canaries, Madeira and the Azores as one in which techniques soon to be used in the New Worlds were tested and perfected. Felipe Fernández Armesto, in his useful study, minutely scrutinizes the opening decades of the sixteenth century in the Canaries, and

despite some reservations in general endorses Verlinden's views. He examines the settlement of the islands, noting the importance of the Genoese, but showing, too, a considerable Portuguese influx, often from Madeira. He describes the establishment of the sugar industry, which was to flourish on some of the Canaries, as in the Portuguese islands, until destroyed by the competition from that of Brazil. Here he makes the further interesting point that Canarian sugar was grown by European sharecroppers—perhaps because of the difficult terrain of the islands—and not on slave-worked plantations as was to be the case in the Iberian Americas. His examination of the trade of the islands produces some fascinating and useful evidence of English and Finnish exploitation from a very early date. Here, however, on the whole he finds the going hard. The Canaries quickly developed into a major centre for

clandestine trade with Portuguese Africa and Spanish America. But such a commerce naturally enough makes only fleeting appearances in the sources and escapes systematic analysis.

By and large the picture which emerges from this painstaking study is the familiar one of an early colonial society. Though the Guanches were barely armed, and though they were weakened by the ravages of European disease, their subjugation, like that of many other primitive peoples, sorely taxed European military skills. After the conquest land passed into the hands of the indigenous inhabitants: were free and not only survived, but prospered. Christianity was imposed, often by force, and some of the new converts were employed by their pagan fellows. Then, once the

opportunities of the newly-discovered Americas were revealed or rumoured, the flow of European settlers to the islands dwindled. All this, Of Fernández-Armesto establishes with great erudition, and by a careful investigation of all the primary and secondary sources. One might perhaps wish that his discussion of the larger aspects he touches on could have been detail he provides on matters of lesser moment. And though there is no doubt as to the value of his study, it can hardly be accepted, in the view of James Lockhart's *Spanish Peru 1532-1560*, as "the first attempt comprehensively to depict the society of a Spanish overseas colony in the sixteenth century, using the great mass of detailed information imparted by notarial archives". Nevertheless it is an honest, competent and useful book, beautifully produced and printed by Oxford University Press.

Pork-barrel politicians

William Scott

MICHAEL L. KENNEDY

The Jacobin Clubs in the French Revolution: The First Years
381pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £19.
0 691 05337 5

Michael Kennedy's study of the Jacobin clubs in the period of the Constituent Assembly (1789-1791) comes at a propitious time. In general terms, it helps to consolidate the recent revival of interest in the political and ideological aspects of the French Revolution, aspects unduly neglected by a socially-oriented history, operating in the *longue durée*, which has tended to relegate the Revolution itself to a subordinate rank, scarcely worthy of the attention previously bestowed upon it as a major rupture of continuity, a literally epoch-making event. More particularly, this first volume of a projected complete history of the Jacobin movement follows closely upon the publication in translation of a controversial general work, François Furet's *Interpreting the French Revolution* which accords great prominence to the Jacobin phenomenon.

The works of Furet and Kennedy could hardly be more different. Furet's is a highly polemical account which divides the political dimension of the Revolution radically from its social and economic aspects. Furet sees the newness of the Revolution as residing wholly in the political and ideological sphere, with a ruthless political ideology achieving near-absolute power as early as 1789 and holding despotic sway until the fall of Robespierre. The Revolution achieved its only in the unrestrained tyranny of an abstract will or project, claiming to be the "will of the people", which affirmed its absolute dominance over "real history". This ideology was Jacobinism.

The intellectual antecedents of this view are both numerous and varied, and some are more avowable than others. Furet is principally inspired by a fascinating conservative historian, Augustin Cochin, who, writing when Socialism and Bolshevism seemed triumphant, saw the abstract Jacobin spirit everywhere, just as his Jacobins had been paranoically obsessed with the machinations of their political enemies.

Kennedy mentions neither Cochin nor Furet, though some aspects of Cochin's work—in particular his marvellously acute analysis of how men behave in assemblies and in political societies in general—would surely have been of interest to him. In contrast, especially to Furet's work, Kennedy's is devoid of polemic intention, soberly written and extensively researched. It is most noteworthy in analysing the early Jacobin clubs in the context of French society as a whole, whether in relation

to social groups largely absent from the movement (women, the poor) or actually present in the clubs. Kennedy clearly shows that the club members debated matters of direct concern to every category of their fellow-citizens. Religious or clerical affairs featured prominently, in the form of the defence of toleration, criticism of the upper clergy and demands for the sale of church property. Financial matters discussed included taxation and the pros and cons of a paper currency. The army and navy were also the subject of debate, as were France's foreign and colonial policies.

Indeed, all the issues of the first years of the Revolution were discussed intensively, often in a well-informed and professional way by men who usually held positions of responsibility in "outside" society. Far from being fanatics or *déclassés* zealots, Jacobins of these years were, fairly affluent citizens, not averse either to advancing their careers and promoting their own fortunes or to lobbying actively for the material interests of their localities. In fact, in one of his most interesting chapters, Kennedy analyses the clubs activities as economic pressure groups engaged in "pork-barrel" politics, drumming up help for local industries, or for improved roads or postal services, and championing a free labour market in France while, on the whole, defending the slave economy of the colonies. He sees this early Jacobinism as including many merchants and manufacturers, as being

confirmed by his account of many of their attitudes outside the more obviously economic field.

Such an interpretation clearly does not admit of a great discrepancy between the political and the social and economic spheres. Nor does Kennedy's picture allow much emphasis to be placed on the tyrannical or totalitarian nature of early Jacobinism. His wide and detailed research suggests, rather, a somewhat heterogeneous movement, certainly forming a nation-wide network, but with its periods of greater or lesser activity, and with variations of pace and interest as between different clubs, as well as moments of vacillation, schism or even retreat. The full treatment given to the provinces, with the clubs of obscure townships getting good attention, indicates that direction from the mother club in Paris was sporadic and often ineffectual. All in all, the clubs were closely tied to the localities, and to the social groups, which gave them birth.

Kennedy's enterprising research thus goes far to correct earlier unbalanced and ill-founded accounts of Jacobinism. With several more volumes to come for the years after 1791, we shall eventually have a full picture of how the early movement differed from that of the Terror. Here, too, on the crucial question of polarization, we must hope that Kennedy's project encourages in would-be theorists a greater degree of

Kin and kine

Eva Gillies

ADAM KUPER

Wives for Cattle: Bridewealth and Marriage in Southern Africa
216pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£11.95.
0 7100 0989 5

In the beginning – a century or so ago – the world of human custom and belief was without form and void, and the spirit of Frazer floated upon the waters. Generalization in those days ran wild and free, feeding voraciously and indiscriminately on all the travellers' tales and classical myth, the introspection of scholars and the reports of missionaries. Then came Malinowski's Trobriand experience; suddenly generalization was out, and monographs (based on thorough, detailed personal research) were in. True, the mere use of language to communicate findings still forced a measure of generalization upon the ethnographer; but the unintentional process went on, as it were, underground, beneath the more acceptable cover of terminological squabbles and the conscientious honing of conceptual tools.

Now, it would seem, generalization has come out into the open again; but on the more solid diet of all those well-researched monographs, it is a different sort of beast altogether. It confines itself, both geographically and thematically, to a defensible territory: child fosterage in West Africa (as here) bridewealth among the Southern Bantu. Within that territory, however, it ranges freely; and its digestion seems unimpeded. The Rain Queen and the Mother's Brother, Swazi dynastic politics and even that tough old chestnut, the Cattle Complex – all is, to vary the metaphor a little, grist to Adam Kuper's mill.

It is a mill that grinds at times a little too fast for the non-specialist. Professor Kuper claims he has tried to arrange his facts in such a way as not to assume any previous knowledge on the part of the reader. But the ethnography on Southern Bantu societies is almost embarrassingly rich: a few more summaries and cross-references would have been useful. Then again, Kuper's professional interest lies, very naturally and properly, on "the dangerous edge of things" – the Lovedu puzzle, the Venda variant, one looks in vain for a more general description of Sotho-Tswana custom in the sphere of

marriage alliance. This makes his book unnecessarily difficult reading.

True, the main argument is clear enough in outline. In all Southern Bantu societies, cattle are used as bridewealth to obtain wives; and these transactions are based on substantially the same set of ideas and values. Yet local bridewealth systems vary considerably. Kuper – starting out from a structuralist's faith in the rule-bound nature of variation – is out to show that local practices are neither simply cobbled-together solutions to particular problems nor departures from a "purer" grand tradition, but represent highly constrained transformations of one another.

All Southern Bantu societies live by a combination of pastoralism (largely the province of men) and agriculture (predominantly that of women); but the relative importance of the two subsistence activities varies. Where agriculture is the more important, women are more highly valued and the cattle bridewealth payments are high, both in comparison with other peoples in the region and in relation to average livestock holdings. Where pastoralism

predominates, bridewealth payments are low (although there are usually more cattle per head of population). Where bridewealth payments are low, a father is usually responsible for providing his sons with the necessary cattle to acquire at least a first wife. In predominantly agricultural societies, on the other hand, a man's father is unlikely to have enough cattle to spare for this purpose; men therefore depend on their sisters to bring in bridewealth, cattle which can then immediately be re-cycled to acquire wives for the brothers. The same distinction also applies within societies, as between the cattle-rich, usually aristocratic families and the poorer mass of the population.

Aristocrats generally marry close kin: "the cattle return to the byre". Among commoners, the bridewealth debt to a sister, where it is given prominence, is often discharged by a woman "following the spoor of her cattle" to find a wife for her son. In terms of alliance theory therefore, matrilineal cross-cousin marriage is favoured – and Kuper agrees with Sir Edmund Leach in seeing in this type of repetitive alliance a reinforcement of any existing tendency to social

stratification. True, he can find no way of predicting whether, in any given society, wife-givers or wife-takers shall be the superior party; what is predictable is that, in either case, the operation of the bridewealth system will tend to maintain that superiority.

The more homogeneous, less stratified societies are also (surely not by accident?) the predominantly pastoral ones. Here, bridewealth is low, and for a first wife is normally provided by a man's father. Marriage with close kin is forbidden to commoners, and alliance structures, where they exist at all, oscillate slowly over a couple of generations. Kuper does indeed posit, on what he himself initially admits is rather shaky evidence, an ingenious three-generation oscillation for the Tsonga; but here I suspect he is simply playing games with his models.

There are other, such moments of scholarly self-indulgence. Chapter Six, for instance, discusses the problems posed by the exasperatingly incomplete "skewing" of Venda terminology for kin and affines. On

Kuper's showing earlier writers on the Venda have allowed themselves to become hypnotized by the terminology into postulating the most improbable behaviours and beliefs to account for it. He has a lot of fun with this; but the argument (as all too often in this book) is so fiercely compressed that the joke is in some danger of remaining a private one. Then again, Chapter Ten, a modish disquisition on Southern Bantu *organisation de l'espace* and its symbolic interpretation, bears the tell-tale marks of its origin in a separate, specialized article: unlike the previous chapter on wedding ceremonies, it never really quite fits into the main argument.

But these are minor quibbles about a book that positively fizzes with new ideas (and, almost in passing, gives decent burial to certain others that have been too long in dying). In the end, one is simply grateful for its intelligence and courage as well as for the sheer range of its argument. It is pleasant to find that generalization has not only survived its long eclipse: it has actually emerged leaner and fitter, and may yet achieve successes unhoped for a generation ago.

uncharacteristic of a book which could hardly be described as a model of logical consistency. Take, for example, Lambek's discussion of the reasons which might explain why Mayotte women are more frequently subject to possession than men. Here he begins by arguing that the spirits which usually possess women are male because masculinity heightens the distinction between (male) spirit and (female) human host and adds authenticity to spirit possession and spirit pronouncements. (This, clearly, assumes that women are the spirit-possessed hosts.) In the immediately following paragraph, the author quickly shifts his ground, to urge that, since the possessing spirits are male, the dramatic effectiveness of possession will be increased if they possess persons of contrasting sex. All this seems very circular, and Lambek is wise to add the rider that "this aesthetic argument clearly cannot fully account for the high proportion of female participants". He goes on to consider cultural factors discouraging men from involvement in possession. These, we learn, rather surprisingly in the light of the foregoing, include the fact that though most spirits are male, they actually behave like women. One cannot help feeling that gender is a very malleable property in Lambek's hands.

It is a pity also that Lambek is not more at home with the relevant comparative literature on spirit-possession and shamanism, some of which is cited in his bibliography. A striking omission is Mircea Eliade's *Techniques of Ecstasy* (1951). Had he read that work carefully, or Michel Leiris's study of Ethiopian possession (which is included in his bibliography), Lambek would have realized that his analysis of possession treatment as an initiation ritual, far from being novel, has a long tradition in the literature. One interesting point that Lambek does make effectively (even if its status is somewhat hypothetical) is that the drama of spirit possession may permit people to see the arbitrary character of their taken-for-granted cultural assumptions. But, for the rest, I feel that the author's approach obscures rather than illuminates the finer shades of meaning in Mayotte culture.

Unfortunately, this style of presentation is becoming common in anthropological writing. Gripped by a kind of epistemological deprivation, many of the young anthropologists of today seem more anxious to anchor their particularistic ethnographic findings in high-sounding grand theory than to engage in a systematic and scholarly examination of their data in the light of relevant comparative material. In my view, this represents an impoverishment of the subject. Malinowski no doubt had his faults, but he represents a more impressive style of "thick description" than that peddled here.

Finally, the Kwakwaka'wakw of Alert Bay and its environs, who have had a vexatious history at the hands of officialdom and with accusations of cannibalism, will find the title of this book deeply offensive. It grates on every present and historical sensibility. Full of surprise as it is, and epitomized as it is by the title, the world may indeed be situated under the maxim "eat and/or be eaten". But for the Kwakwaka'wakw, as for others, the order and harmony necessary for survival can only become possible by imposing on that world moralities grounded in mutual respect.

Lulu and trumba

I. M. Lewis

MICHAEL LAMBEK

Human Spirits: A Cultural Account of Trance in Mayotte
219pp. Cambridge University Press.
£17.50.
0 521 23844 7

The anthropologist, like the philologist, seeks to contextualize "conceptually distant texts", to reduce "other people's symbolic constructions without sacrificing their richness and complexity". Thus Michael Lambek introduces his study of possession and trance on the tiny Indian Ocean island of Mayotte. His concern is with "meaning", which he seeks to elucidate with the aid of semiotics and structuralism. His helping spirits are principally such familiar figures as Roman Jakobson, Paul Ricoeur, Roland Barthes and, naturally, Claude Lévi-Strauss. Further inspiration is provided by the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz, whose characterization of the anthropological enterprise as "thick description" (not, of course, in the colloquial English sense) is invoked to fortify Dr

Lambek's ambitious exercise in what he terms "depth interpretation".

The book opens with a brief account of the history and social setting in which Mayotte Islanders, mainly women, are assailed by two types of spirit. The first, known generally as *lulu* or *djin* (cf Arabic *jinn*, an equation the author strangely ignores), are not ancestor spirits. The second, in contrast, called *trumba*, are the ancestors of an immigrant Malagasy dynasty which sought refuge in Mayotte in 1831 and whose last king died in 1847, becoming the leader of this group of spirits. Despite the emphasis on rich cultural detail conveyed by the book's subtitle and the approving references to Geertzian "thick description", this is actually a rather thin account, particularly in regard to the important question of the history of Islam in Mayotte and its impact on pre-Islamic religion and social structure. These are issues that crop up again later in the text but are never treated in sufficient depth or detail to enable one to gauge the extent to which the pattern of spirit possession described might reflect the marginalization by Islam of earlier cults. Indeed, an outstanding defect of the author's approach is this lack of any

dynamic, diachronic perspective which would shed light on the data presented.

With the hackneyed conclusion that possession is a "system of communication" (which ceased to be news a long time ago), we move in Part Two – styled "the syntagmatic dimension" – to consider in some detail two case histories of possessed women. This ends unexpectedly with an arresting quotation from a mad woman: "What makes a person a person is other people", a cheerfully extrovert assertion which Lambek glosses as: "our essence is social". The third and concluding part of this study seeks to identify the symbolic inversions "that organize spirit behaviour". Yet, having earlier emphasized the essential difference between humans and spirits, the author now performs a sharp U-turn, arguing that children and spirits share common properties of irresponsibility, irrepressibility and wild energy. Although *trumba* spirits are divided into three distinct age categories – elders, youths and children – Lambek confidently asserts that all spirits (including, apparently, the non-ancestral *lulu*) are essentially children.

This impressive volte-face in the argument is not in any way

Orality and morality

K. O. L. Burridge

STANLEY WALENS

Feasting with Cannibals: An Essay on Kwakwaka'wakw Cosmology
191pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £10.50.
0 691 00992 X

Frantz Fanon worked on the anthropology of the Indians of the north-west coast of America for over half a century. Yet in thirteen trips from 1886 to 1951 he logged only twenty-five days in the field, of which some five or six months, spread over eight trips, were spent among the Kwakwaka'wakw on the coast and islands of north-eastern Vancouver Island. Nevertheless, mainly through George Hunt, son of an English trader and Tahitian mother, whom he had trained in ethnographic techniques, Fanon amassed a huge corpus of information on the Kwakwaka'wakw and neighbouring peoples. Mining this rich deposit, the larger part of which remains unpublished, and reworking the material to suggest one or another view of human nature or society or culture, has made the career of many an anthropologist in France and North America, though not in Britain.

Setting aside the more obvious and practical reasons for this, one may remark that while the Hunt-Boss corpus, loose and malleable as it is, is

grist to the mills of French philosophic theory – so often posing problems pertinent to the existence of universals in the human condition – it has provided a departure for American cultural anthropology, which continues to influence significantly, it is weak in precisely those details which mark British social anthropology: the constraints inherent in positional relationships in particular situations. While French ethnology has been held by the logic of a paradigm into whose categories the Hunt-Boss material may be fitted, and the American cultural anthropologist may use the data to construct a thematics under varying and variable constraints, for the British social anthropologist the "very armature on which to build a model is either vague or entirely lacking."

These different approaches will inevitably colour the reception of the book under review. It explores the Hunt-Boss corpus without benefit of fieldwork, and though it is set in a semantic rather than psychodynamic context is well within the tradition of cultural anthropology. It is a study, say Stanley Walens, of the intellectual content of Kwakwaka'wakw culture, and unlike other studies (with the exception of Irving Goldman's *The Mists of Heaven*, 1978) is grounded in indigenous rather than imposed categories. All the features of the argument go, as are inextricably linked. Can it be a matter of similarity and continuity, harmony in the universe

depends on precise and proper behaviour in all situations; the operative principle is the assimilation of one item within the boundaries of another. Kwakwaka'wakw understand and describe this process of continuing transformations by means of metaphors derived from the act of eating. Hence an emphasis on orality, the mouth that in engulfing also transforms. Since all life, including mythological beings, is involved in the process, eating is seen as "universal property of the world, and thus it is the basis for morality."

The argument is sustained through consideration of a variety of practices, including eating, myth, art and ritual activities, particularly the winter ceremonies which involve the *hamasa* or Cannibal Dancer – from which, presumably, the title is derived – and is persuasive, despite the fact that Allan Dundes in a recent essay (1979), working on the same materials in a psychodynamic mode, argues that the Kwakwaka'wakw are more than oral: "For Walens writes very well and with a nice pace. He is never boring."

But there are questions to be asked. Who or what, for instance, are "the spirits", so frequently mentioned in the collective and as causative, but otherwise undefined? Are they perhaps imagined as eyes, as much emphasized in Kwakwaka'wakw carving and mythology as are mouths and snapping jaws? Or, since the contexts imply an animism where every apparent and

sensible existent is predicated by an inner or deeper and active reality, is "spirit" a metaphor, for both author and Kwakwaka'wakw, for an unknown causality? And then, since one who cannot repay what he has been eaten is often described as "being eaten", surely eating, far from being the basis of morality, characterizes the world as it is, or would be were the moralities of mutual respect and reciprocal exchange not imposed upon it. So one might go on. Without methodological controls – and there are none here – the interpretation of metaphor inevitably leads into a world where everything is a metaphor for something else, and other. In this perhaps lies a deep truth. And yet, because metaphors running wild tend to circle back on themselves, there must come a point of closure: where phrases are deemed to be literal, not metaphorical.

Finally, the Kwakwaka'wakw of Alert Bay and its environs, who have had a vexatious history at the hands of officialdom and with accusations of cannibalism, will find the title of this book deeply offensive. It grates on every present and historical sensibility. Full of surprise as it is, and epitomized as it is by the title, the world may indeed be situated under the maxim "eat and/or be eaten". But for the Kwakwaka'wakw, as for others, the order and harmony necessary for survival can only become possible by imposing on that world moralities grounded in mutual respect.

FICTION

Raising professional standards

D. J. Enright

DESMOND BRIGGS

The Partners
328pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.50.
0 436 06855 9

We had better pass over what might generously be called the human elements in this novel, together with the author's appetite for descriptions of clothes and accessories (Pucci silk shirts, Gucci bags, yellow silk suits, green silk suits, Cardier watches, whiffs of Patou's Joy) and of fancy food (a veritable Pseudo Corner table). At one point Green Velvet (the recipe follows) is quaffed between mused ranks of green carnations and amid the assorted smells of Balkan tobacco, musk and other perfumes. At another there is "an excellent dinner" of "boeuf bourguignon"; alas, and not to mention the missing vowel, *boeuf* is masculine; but perhaps the confusion of genders is symbolic. The sex – its specifics modestly confined to writhings under a silken canopy and the consequent "sweet disorder" of a bed – is (I would imagine) likely to infuriate any honest homosexual, just as the meals consumed will shock those workers in the book trade who try to make do on luncheon vouchers.

Let us, rather, look at the professional side of the story. People generally write interestingly about their own jobs and, since the author has been a publisher for twenty-five

years, we ought to learn something from him about that strange trade – as exemplified in the history of Jeremy Gold Ltd, "the flamboyant Etonian publisher" who rose and fell during the swinging Sixties. Indeed, there are shrewd hints: the secretary who loathes typing, the worthy reps comparing notes while queuing up outside Hatches, the warning (hardly borne out by the fictional events) that life with Graham Greene at the Garrick West at Ibsstone. One character's remark, "It's wonderful working at Weidenfelds", will produce a glow of pleasure in some quarters, and likewise Jeremy's tip for tross: simply hand the manuscript to your printer "and tell him to make it look like a Cape book".

If you don't have confidence in your products who will? And Jeremy is blessed with "the true publisher's gift of loving all his books", irrespective of their "literary merit" – just as he loves or at least beds virtually all who come his way, irrespective of gender, marital status, prior commitments or literary merit. His partner, more serious, less flamboyant, often to be found on his feet and even in the office, first realizes he is truly a publisher when a writer addresses him "with a kind of hectoring deference" – this is a good touch, though he might have added that writers realize what they truly are when publishers address them with a kind of deferential hectoring. The importance of book clubs and paperback deals is duly and depressingly stressed. Practical advice is given on how to sign

a contract ("at the end of the document") and the meaning of the term "subscription" (v Johnson's Dictionary) is explained.

Among Jeremy's short-lived literary loves is a book on rabies: "I rang up Terry this morning and he says the *Observer* might well want to serialize it." Ostensibly better bets are *A History of Fetish*, written by "a tall young man with an olive complexion and full, red, sensual lips", a salacious American bestseller, *The Brigand*, which has to be toned down for the huge sales, *Gold's Cyclopaedia* ("like *Whitaker's Almanac* or *Pears*"), and a broader and more up-to-date, and "a fascinating and lubricious piece of Bloomsburiana for which we had hopes of sales in excess of 20,000 copies" – presumably something the Hogarth Press had cold-shouldered.

Those intending to enter publishing and hoping for enlightenment will gather three important things: (a) they need to be homosexual or preferably bisexual (though a heterosexual production manager might occasionally get by); (b) they require a sizeable personal fortune and lots of wealthy and credulous friends or lovers, and a stomach of steel as well; and (c) they must understand that their real economic enemies are not the public's version to books or the paucity of good ones but quite simply death duties and divorce. Also, they will have to wait for the 1960s to come round again.

Criminal proceedings

T. J. Binyon

ANTONIA FRASER

Cool Repentance
222pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£6.95.
0 297 78127 8

Megallith Television sends its star reporter, Jimma Shore, down to Larnister in the south-west to make a film of the well-known local festival. At the same time Christabel Herrick, famous actress who has just returned to her husband and family after a well-advertised romp with a young pop star, announces her intention of taking the lead in the two plays which are to be put on at the festival. An unfortunate decision, since it arouses hostility and, in the end, leads to death. Antonia Fraser's fourth Jimma Shore novel is possibly the best: the plot is stitched together with neat precision, and the ending bursts upon the reader to great effect. Television personalities and theatre Harrys are taken off with a light and witty mockery; particularly pleasing is the portrait of ex-ODS director Sir Fitzwilliam, famed among the connoisseurs for his Chinese (Sung dynasty) Hamlet at the Edinburgh festival. An added (if slightly inbred) charm of the novel is its unobtrusive *roman à clef* element: here, for example, on whom could Jamie Grand, a suave and debonair background figure, described as the powerful editor of *Literature*, possibly be modelled?

PETER TURNBULL
Dead Knock
205pp. Collins. £6.50.
0 00 231688 9

The Glaswegian policeman of Peter Turnbull's first novel, *Deep and Crisp* and *Even*, are back, but with a more exotic case: Chinese heroin smugglers with a Dutch connection. Glasgow and its natives are, as before, excellently done; the foreign elements are slightly less convincing, but nevertheless the whole very much reinforces the good impression made by the earlier book.

ANDREW COBURN
Company Secrets
276pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.50.
0 436 10292 7

George Burnham is an over-sensitive assassin employed by a cover agency called C&D Consultants. Behind it lurks perhaps the CIA, perhaps an oil cartel, perhaps some other power. On the edge of a breakdown, and as a result thought to be a security risk, Burnham himself becomes a target for former colleagues. Andrew Coburn's excellent last book, *Off Duty*, took place in the relatively straightforward world of crooked cops and organized crime. *Company Secrets*, however, moves into the murky twilight of conjecture, fitfully illuminated by the leaps of paranoid paranoia. The detail is still spicily convincing, and the execution admirable; nevertheless, it's something of a disappointment that the author should have made a tally into this genre.

REGINALD HILL
Who Guards a Prince
276pp. Collins. £7.50.
0 00 22612 2

It appears to one's regret that Reginald Hill has now abandoned the Northern policemen – uncouth, brutal and south-Pascoe – of his

earlier books. In his last novel, *The Spy's Wife*, he turned to treason, giving a hackneyed theme original and intriguing treatment. *Who Guards a Prince*, in which the motivating forces are immense wealth and immense power, obviously has been aimed at blockbuster status, and no doubt will achieve it. Its cast list includes minor English royalty, a rich Boston Irish family (called Connolly, not Kennedy), evilly eccentric Freemasons, and, as hero, a middle-aged but still tougher than tough Scots policeman with domestic problems. There are a lot of good things about the book: telling detail, swift narration, and a character who knows and makes use of the distinction between disinterested and uninterested. But the overall effect is rather that of an over-enlarged photograph, with the subtleties lost and the grain beginning to show up just a bit too coarsely.

MICHAEL Z. LEWIN

Missing Woman

213pp. Robert Hale. £6.75.
0 7091 9699 7

Penurious Indianapolis private detective Albert Samson is about to close up shop for good when he's rescued by the appearance of a client: a woman who wants him to trace a former college classmate. The request seems innocuous, but it involves Samson in a double disappearance out in rural Indiana, where the Hoosiers go for their weekends. Of all the private eyes who chase panting after Philip Marlowe and Lew Archer, Samson is undoubtedly up near the head of the list. Michael Z. Lewin writes well, uses detail sparingly but effectively to establish the local atmosphere, allows his hero moments of calm introspection as well as of hectic activity, and, like Ross Macdonald, realizes that the causes for human behaviour may not necessarily lie around on the surface of life, but may be buried deep in the past.

ROBERT BARNARD

Death and the Princess

183pp. Collins. £6.50.
0 00 231922 5

Perry Trethowan, the blue-blooded Scotland Yard Superintendent who last investigated the murder of his father, is called in to take charge of the security arrangements for a member of the royal family – an attractive young princess – after a rumour that her life might be in danger. A pleasant, neatly wrought entertainment with a surprise ending, Robert Barnard is perhaps not at all stretchy, but then he can write most under the table with one hand behind his back.

MICHAEL INNES

Shelks and Adders

157pp. Collins. £5.95.
0 055 03043 7

Sir John Appleby, long retired but far from geriatric, is drawn by curiosity, and a typically Michael Innes young maiden to a fancy dress charity fête at the well-named Dross Court; his presence proving more than useful when a visitor robed as an Arab is transfixed by an arrow during the archery competition. A light-hearted, frothy and amusing tale with good scenes, ingenious use of available material (Boy Scouts and herpetologists), and pleasing academic badinage.

The skiptrace trail

David Profumo

G. F. NEWMAN

The Men with the Guns
242pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.95.
0 436 30535 6

The first thing that distinguishes *The Men with the Guns* from G. F. Newman's previous novels is that it is written in American. From its first word (Prologue) to the last (theater) the book identifies its concerns and its language with a certain dimension of American society that would be understood by a British perspective on its native intrigues. To the "listening eye" of a British reader, this produces some difficult syntactical concatenations – they tried small talk, but even that had gotten out of the way of – but on the whole both narrative and dialogue benefit from this homogeneity of tone, and from Newman's excellent ear for accent.

Jimmy Vanesco is a hardened skiptrace, a man who finds missing persons for money. Four years after leaving the FBI (which Newman treated in *The List*) he is hired to trace the whereabouts of six men missing since 1963. Normally unconcerned with the reasons for any mission, Vanesco instinctively begins to realize that behind this task, opaque forces altogether more sinister and disturbing than the Mafia boss, Harry Kohn, for whom he initially thinks he is working, from Mexico and Canada to Ireland, London and Venice the sleuth pursues the trail: but as he locates the men, they are systematically murdered. Arriving at an understanding of what they have in common, he discovers that, immediately before they disappeared, they had collectively worked on some CIA project for Lawrence Wallerichinsky, now the Nixon regime's ambassador elect to China – the first since 1949. And he is only one of several parties interested in finding the truth, intentions in each case being far from benevolent. Vanesco's personal determination "rerum cognoscere

causas" puts him in similar danger once the secret is revealed; from then on, Newman manages to transform the book into an intricate study of political manipulation.

Until this moment the novel is a dislocated series of scenes which shifts attention geographically in a way that requires a special concentration from the reader, as Vanesco travels the world seeking some continuity between the fragments of what he finds. But it is a world recognizably Newman's: corruption is gristly accepted as part of the system of survival ("No one cares what you do so long as you can't get caught"). Vanesco's pursuit of the truth is no act of heroic idealism, however: through him, Newman investigates the tension between the theoretical desirability of truth and its practical unacceptability. Even the skiptrace realizes his reluctance to accept the implications of what he discovers; the knowledge of international conspiracy and self-interest perforate his own illusion of the forces that have shaped recent political history.

"All that we imagine is real" runs the epigraph to the novel's third book, and the suggestion is that political conspiracy survives because people prefer to believe the image of honest order that it parades; some such principle also defends the novel's speculations about the matrix of American power against any hefty charges of implausibility. Newman has imaginatively reconstructed one of America's most controversial experiences, but he has done so from a basis of ascertainable facts that are open to different interpretations. Who can be sure which is the true version? Like most of the novel's characters, we would prefer the reassuring simplicity of the currently official version – a complacency that this book seeks to disturb.

This is an ambitiously conceived novel. Despite the fragmentary structure of its early stages, it is worth persisting with in order to arrive at the extraordinary situation that Newman has conceived – with the help, the dust-jacket tells us, of contacts in the FBI. Afficionados may guess something of its secret from the map on the front.

The spirit of Hawthorne

Lindsay Duguid

URSULA BENTLEY

The Natural Order
218pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.50.
0 436 04020 4

The Natural Order in fact encompasses a very odd set of circumstances, ranging from a shadowy Home Counties background, via a Catholic boys' grammar school, to the dubious liberation of a man-free ménage in a moorland cottage. And all this comes about as a result of admiration for the Brontës.

The heroine-narrator of Ursula Bentley's novel, Carol (known as Carlo), identifies with Charlotte; the wilder, rancier Damaris is Emily and the pretty and demure one is Anne. The three girls are not sisters, but believe that "some terrible failure of astral conjunctions" linked them in Kingston in the 1850s rather than Yorkshire in the 1840s. Sharing a lower-middle-class respectability and a sense of longing, they forge an unremarkable but solid sisterhood for themselves. "It was hard to believe that even in marriage one could re-create the relaxation of being with someone to whom one could say things almost too private to say to oneself."

Their longing for spiritual independence leads them to seek a more arduous setting for their beliefs: first Carlo, and then Anne, follow Damaris to Manchester, to share a life and to join the staff of the Blessed Ambrose Carstairs School. Their desire for a non-Home Counties kind of hardship is amply fulfilled: the school – a place of extraordinary brutality where the higher notions of Christianity held by the monastic staff are barely imposed on the animalistic

provide the background to growing up. Shining out of the chaos is the slender and alluring figure of Shackleton, the most promising Sixth Form ever, who ensnares each of the girls in turn (unknown to the others), and who, by fathering Anne's child, draws them together just when it looked as though real life was beginning to dispel the Brontë myth.

Shackleton is endowed with a certain believability – rather too generously, indeed, for any feminist thesis to be persuasive. He is given credit for teenage bewilderment and comes off rather worse than his female victims. The element of fable is less dominant than the Brontë myth suggests, despite a tendency to gothicize the school scenes (it is hard to believe the setting is modern in some places); the spirit of Hawthorne gets its come-uppance in a description of the ice-cream sellers and dry trippers crowding into the Brontë museum.

A serious flaw is the characterization of the three girls, who are irrational, odd and desperately unattractive. Descriptions of "hat-sharing" show even in marriage one could re-create the relaxation of being with someone to whom one could say things almost too private to say to oneself. Their longing for spiritual independence leads them to seek a more arduous setting for their beliefs: first Carlo, and then Anne, follow Damaris to Manchester, to share a life and to join the staff of the Blessed Ambrose Carstairs School. Their desire for a non-Home Counties kind of hardship is amply fulfilled: the school – a place of extraordinary brutality where the higher notions of Christianity held by the monastic staff are barely imposed on the animalistic

ESTC six years on

R. C. Alston

On July 2, 1976, Nicolas Barker gave an account in these pages of a conference held at the British Library to explore the feasibility of producing a catalogue of English printing in the eighteenth century. Tactful, if perhaps at times over-discreet, Barker's account nevertheless made it clear that the conference that June had addressed itself to a task of heroic proportions. The deliberations of those who attended the conference were circumscribed always by fundamental questions to which there seemed to be no answers. I can think of no topic considered at the conference which did not depend, for a reasonable strategy to be suggested, on numbers; and numbers were precisely what we were ignorant of. On numbers depended policies of inclusion and exclusion; methodology; about all, finance. It is impossible to predict the time required to sail from the Old world to the New—until you have done it. And who, in the bleak financial climate of 1976, would fund an adventure like ESTC (the Eighteenth-century Short Title Catalogue) where few, if any, reliable estimates could be produced to support strategies requiring a vast expenditure of public money?

One individual, who showed that "fine disregard for the rules of the game" as William Webb Ellis had done at Rugby, accepted the challenge and perceived the opportunity: D. T. Richetti, the first Director General of the Reference Division of the British Library. Mercifully, perhaps, he was spared the diligent speculations of the

conference itself (he was leading a delegation of British librarians to China). He arranged for work to be started. Now, on July 5, just six years later, scholars in Britain, continental Europe, North America and Australasia can sample the first-fruits of a bibliographical project that will fundamentally alter our conception of the century which bestowed on us more benefits than were ever dreamed of in the schools of pedantic history.

The Eighteenth-century STC has become, by now, sufficiently well known in academic and library circles not to require elaborate explication. What does, perhaps, require some explication is why the British Library's decision to make available on its information network, BLAISE, the real progress which has been made since 1976 provides opportunities that previous catalogues never have. The British Library is not only the most important resource for English eighteenth-century printing; on July 5 it becomes the most important resource for information retrieval in computer-assisted access to printed materials of a century which witnessed the transition, in Marshall McLuhan's terms, from manuscript to print. Supported by a technology which few need to understand, researchers can now interrogate a file of some 140,000 bibliographical records in ways that no multitude of patiently compiled indexes could ever achieve. For the first time in the history of bibliography the truly curious have an opportunity to be gratified. The apparent miracle of the microchip has replaced the

index; replaced the drudgery of the multiple index; made possible the relational index. We can now ask questions we could never answer before. New questions have the disconcerting habit of starting new approaches; and new approaches, where they involve the computer, inevitably arouse suspicions.

The computer can be seen—probably is seen by many readers of the *TLS*—as a threat. But not to those whose endeavours to recover lost knowledge depend less on the yeoman virtues of tireless labour than the application of ingenuity in changed circumstances. The time for merely compiling lists has passed. With it goes a school of literary and historical research for which there is little ultimate value beyond the accumulation of data. The labour of compiling the basic material will be less, but there will be a corresponding necessity to exercise the faculties which distinguish the historian from the dredger.

The effects of having access to a machine-readable file such as ESTC will take some time to emerge, but one consequence will be the disappearance of much that currently gets printed in learned journals. There will be little point in pursuing lists of books printed by particular booksellers; the number of imprints before 1750 in which the phrase "published by" occurs; pamphlets on the American crisis published by John Almon; books printed by Thomas Saint in Newcastle and sold by Binns in Leeds; poems on

the fall of Walpole; garlands printed by Harward at Tewkesbury and distributed by the news-carriers; travels in Turkey; treatises on vegetables; books with "Londres" imprints; etc. etc. Such lists can now be generated by the computer with ease and at a comparatively small cost.

The computer will not, of course, perform all tasks with equal ease. There are limits to what it can reasonably be expected to do. Since the limitations are dictated by the parameters of ESTC records it is worth noting that the following segments of bibliographical data can occur in an ESTC record: year of publication (the ascertained date and not necessarily what occurs in the imprint); country of publication; language of publication; cataloguing source (the library possessing the copy used for the prime record); shelf-mark of the cataloguing source; author (whether personal or corporate); uniform or collective title; title; imprint (both the place of publication and the rest of the imprint data, with provision for normalized forms of place-names found in Latin or variant forms); physical description (pagination, illustration and format); added entries for additional authors (both personal and corporate); general notes (contents, authorship, etc.); bibliographical references (eg. Foxon numbers); locations (divided among the British Isles, North America and the rest of the world); copy notes for the cataloguing source copy; verified locations (indexed by library and shelf-mark); unverified locations (indexed by library only).

It is essential to understand that while any particular field can be searched (ie, any of the specific bibliographical segments listed above), it is as easy to search two or more fields simultaneously. Thus one might search for all illustrated books about mathematical instruments, or English translations of foreign works on chemistry, or sermons printed in America between 1701 and 1749 but excluding those printed in Boston, New York and Philadelphia. Further refinements are always possible, depending on the ultimate objective of the search. In order to counter the belief held by those who are unfamiliar with on-line bibliographical catalogues that computer searches are costly,

the following search took under two minutes at a total cost to the interrogator, at current tariffs, of about one pound:

- 1) Find all drama (ie, titles having the words play/plays, comedy, tragedy, farce, drama/dramatic) in the file: result - 5,841;
- 2) Find those printed/published in Ireland: result - 776;
- 3) Find those which are anonymous and unattributed: result - 29;
- 4) Find only those printed between 1750 and 1759: result - 11.

One of the concerns which was repeatedly expressed by those who attended the 1976 conference was that idealistic notions of what might be done using the new technology should not inhibit the appearance, within a reasonable time, of a practical tool for the use of scholars. Shortcomings would be forgiven: omissions could always be rectified, and errors corrected. This has been kept in the forefront of thinking at every stage of the project. The file that is being made available on July 5 is still in an uncorrected unedited state; that should be rectified by the end of the year. Also, there are some 10,000 books in the British Library still to be catalogued. Next year the really significant phase will begin: incorporating the bulk of the records which have been submitted to the project by libraries throughout the British Isles. Next year will also see the beginning of the American side of the project, incorporating records being submitted from libraries throughout North America, and available for searching on the Research Libraries Information Network of the Research Libraries Group at Stanford University. The holdings of libraries in Australia and New Zealand should be incorporated by 1983. When these holdings have been added the file will probably have over 400,000 records representing some two million copies in over a thousand libraries. The implications of that for the future of eighteenth-century studies can only be guessed. But I find it difficult to believe that they will be anything but momentous.

Duke Humfrey

Conor Fahy

ALFONSO SAMMUT

Unfredo duca di Gloucester e gli umanisti italiani
247pp. Padua: Antenore.

Between 1439 and 1443 Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester, youngest brother of Henry V, presented a total of 274 manuscripts to the University of Oxford. This munificent donation was also remarkable by virtue of its contents. Together with patristic, theological, legal and medical manuscripts, unexceptional in an English library of the period, there was a substantial representation of the New Learning recently established in Italy, with original works by Petrarch, Boccaccio and other humanists, many Latin classics and some Latin translations of Greek classics, including one of Plato's *Republic*, specially commissioned by the Duke from the Milanese humanist Pier Candido Decembrio.

The importance of Duke Humfrey's gift in the cultural life of fifteenth-century Oxford, and England, was immense. It stimulated and trained the first generation of English humanists, all Oxford men; it was the source of the English diffusion of the texts themselves; and it introduced humanistic script and book illustration into England.

Alfonso Sammut's book is the latest and most original contribution to the story of how Duke Humfrey built up his library (or rather the humanistic part of it, since we have practically no

information on any other aspect of his collecting activities). The work's principal merit is that it brings together all available information on the subject, and adds to it in one particular area, through a detailed description of surviving manuscripts belonging to the Duke. The reconstruction of the history of individual manuscripts, from their composition to their recent resting-place, is a painstaking type of interdisciplinary scholarship which has been fully cultivated in recent years. Dr Sammut is a skilled exponent of this highly technical form of cultural history, and the thirty-odd pages devoted to the remains of Duke Humfrey's library are the most stimulating of the book.

Sadly, there are only forty manuscripts in his list and of these only thirteen, once formed part of the Oxford donations, which fell victim to the spoliation of Church property at the Reformation, and were destroyed or dispersed during the reign of Edward VI. Three manuscripts have subsequently found their way back to the Bodleian. These, and the building which the University erected to house the Duke's gifts, are all that now remains of his munificence.

Dr Sammut also publishes the text of all the fifteenth-century lists of Duke Humfrey's books, and of the surviving correspondence between the Duke and Italian humanists, including dedicatory letters. The opening section of his book contains richly documented, episodic account of Duke Humfrey's links with Italian humanists, difficult to follow in places for readers not already familiar with the material. Like all works from this publisher, the book is well printed, carefully indexed and a pleasure to use.

Arctic booty

Redmond O'Hanlon

J. C. H. KING

Artificial Curiosities from the Northwest Coast of America: Native American Artifacts in the British Museum collected on the Third Voyage of Captain James Cook and acquired through Sir Joseph Banks.
87pp. British Museum Publications.
£45.
0 7141 1562 2

For the eighteenth-century Pacific Eskimo, hunting along the shoreline of the Alaskan wastes,

Next to the otter, the most valuable animal in the estimation of the Cadlact men, is the species of seal or sea-dog, called by the Russians Nerpa. It is caught with nets, made of the same material as the line of the sea-otter arrow; or killed when asleep; or which is the easiest manner of taking it, enticed towards the shore. A fisherman, concealing the lower part of his body amongst the rocks, puts on his head a wooden cap, or rather casque, resembling the head of a seal, and makes a noise like that animal. The unsuspecting seal, imagining he is about to meet a partner of his own species, hastens to the spot, and is instantly killed.

So wrote the explorer Captain Urey Lisiansky in his *A voyage around the world in the Years 1803, 4, 5 and 6; performed, by order of His Imperial Majesty Alexander the First, Emperor of Russia, in the ship Neva* (1814), quoted here to illustrate a superb colour plate of a seal decoy helmet, probably collected by Cook on May 15, 1778, in Prince William Sound. It is a

marvellous piece of functional sculpture, head poked up, just surfaced on the page, and benignly untroubled by past betrayals, still looking for a mate across the icy waters.

With a scholarly exactness characteristic of this lavish volume (which embraces a wide-ranging and detailed bibliography, a clear index, five descriptive appendices on the Northwest Coast, Ethnographical and Menzies collections, and a "Report on the Examination of two Knives from the Northwest Coast of America" by Janet Lang and Nigel Meeks) we are told that the dual moustachio whiskers of the seal appeal decoy identify it (by the courtesy of the Sea Mammal Research Unit at Cambridge) as a representative of *Erignathus barbatus*, the bearded seal.

And among the loving documentation of this booty of eagle-quill visors, whalebone clubs, harpoons, sinew lines, stone daggers, bentwood helmets, herring racks, gut frocks and elk-horn spoons, still-potent memorials of the first meeting of Europeans with these groups of native Americans, there are other glimpses of Eskimo life. Not just by way of the most miserable dish in the world, "in the form of a humanoid figure", laid out flat along the ground by its burden of blubber and grease, eyes blank with the inexpressible tedium of its days, or even via the "Nootkan wood bowl in the form of a woman holding her feet", upturned on her back, her demanding and capacious eroticism a needy distraction in the long night of the Arctic winter, but also, around a woman's basketry hat, for instance, there is an illustration supporting tales of myths collected by travellers and anthropologists. In a

delightful fantasy of transparent wish-fulfilment—understandable enough in a people forced to pursue their huge prey in tiny kayaks, armed only with wooden harpoons—the great mountain-dwelling thunderbird, after a simple air strike protected by a fighter screen of attendant feathered lightning serpents, carries away in its talons, osprey-like, one whole whale.

Still, the careful understatement of the commentary gradually make it plain that the majority of the artefacts in this particular thunderbird-board at the British Museum might have fared better if stored in an igloo, on a melting ice floe, with a polar bear as the Director of the Collection. Unlike natural history specimens, artificial curiosities were at first almost valueless. They disintegrated; they succumbed to whalebone fatigue; English clothes moth found Shish mountain goat-wood blankets unexpectedly good to eat; woodworm made indiscriminate journeys into the private parts of a Nootkan wood figure of a woman feeding a child; they were exchanged, auctioned, moved from cellar to cellar, and a fund was requested to provide an oven "for occasionally baking of feathers and furs" to rid them of vermin. In addition, we are informed, in a hair-raising aside, the accuracy of the information provided by the original labels is "qualified by the way in which they may be transferred on to the wrong objects."

But if the care given to this volume is any indication of the future fortunes of the Collection, then even the Yukon elk-horn spoons may hold their delicate handles high in the calm assurance that in several centuries' time they will still be there to be admired.

Aerial attractions

Jean Mellanby

MARGARET BROOKS and
CHARLES KNIGHT

A Complete Guide to British
Butterflies

159pp. Cap. £10.95.
0 224 01958 9

This is a lovely book. The jacket is very striking, with a beautiful picture of the Large Tortoiseshell butterfly. The paper is excellent, the typography, printing and binding all splendid. Margaret Brooks and Charles Knight, as well as Cape, are to be congratulated on a fine piece of book production.

useful introduction to the biology of butterflies, dealing with recognition and identification, the life cycle, anatomy, different stages of life, variations, enemies and diseases, protective devices, dispersal and migration, nomenclature and classification. There are separate brief sections on breeding, collecting and photography.

One or two small criticisms may be made. There is no bibliography. The adult butterfly pictures are not always reproduced to the same scale; the Purple Emperor, for instance, wingspan 75 mm, is slightly reduced in size, and so is rather diminished in splendour, compared with the common Blue, wingspan 35 mm, looking

here almost the same size. Theorists may raise eyebrows at the hints on collecting, but the authors go out of their way to stress the Code for Insect Collecting drawn up by the Joint Committee for the conservation of British insects and they give all the right caveats to avoid over-collecting.

The two authors are not academic entomologists, but in a sense amateurs. They certainly cannot be classed as unqualified, as they have amply qualified themselves by their devoted work. They belong to the old tradition of naturalists and writers, and prove once again that the best writing on natural history is the fruit of dedication and empathy.

Lumber region

Scott Leathart

GERALD WILKINSON

A History of Britain's Trees

176pp. Hutchinson. £9.95.
0 09 146000 X

The British Isles became detached from their parent continent relatively soon after the return of life to the land following the last great Ice Age, and the water barrier put an end to the natural migration of most plants and mammals. At the time of this severance, some 6,000 years ago, it seems from pollen evidence buried in peat and bogs that only about thirty-five species of trees had been able to make the journey from ice-free Southern Europe and had contrived to survive and spread over the land freed by the retreating ice. *A History of Britain's Trees* is an account of how and when the other 300 or so tree species which now grow in Britain arrived here.

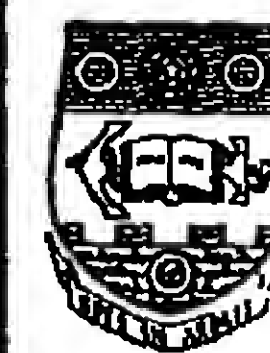
Neolithic people, not so simple as we once supposed, may have introduced some trees usually considered to have arrived naturally. The Romans certainly introduced others, notably the walnut and the sweet chestnut. Our seafaring adventures ranged further afield and brought back seeds and plants of many different

nineteenth century few trees indigenous to the temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere had not been brought to and grown in Britain. One even, the Dawn Redwood, came as late as 1948 after escaping the notice of plant hunters in China until 1941.

With this discovery the story ends: a story told with gusto and affection for the subjects, but with a distracting tendency to insert personal pronouns, asides and a welter of contractions such as "don't" and "can't" and "won't". Botanical information is somewhat unevenly distributed and recognition is in no way assisted by black-and-white illustrations; many of them no bigger than postage stamps; but the colour photographs are for the most part superb.

A Forestry Century: The History of the Royal Forestry Society of England, Wales and Northern Ireland by N. D. O. James. 196pp. Blackwell. £12.50. 0 631 13013 2. traces the evolution of the Forestry Society from its beginnings in 1882 in Northumberland. By 1905 it had become the principal authority on forestry in England and Wales and was accorded royal patronage by Edward VII. With the establishment of the Forestry Commission after the First World War the Society became the champion of private forestry, campaigning to restore derelict

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS



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Applications for the undermentioned post are invited and must reach the Director, Personnel Department, on the prescribed form or by letter, on or before 18 July 1982, or as soon as possible thereafter.

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BY TELEPHONE Pretoria 440-1000 or
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The successful candidate will
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and to have experience in the
collection and analysis of
non-official statistics. The post
will be a full-time position.

For further information, please
contact the Director of
Research, Warwick University,
Coventry, CV4 7AL.

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LECTURES & MEETINGS

VIRGINIA WOOLF CENTENARY
CONFERENCE

21-22 SEPTEMBER 1982 FITZWILLIAM COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

Speakers include: John Bayley, Gillian Beer,
Bernard Bergonzi, Frank Kermode, Hermione Lee.
Further information from Dr E. Warner,
Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge CB3 0DG.

20-22 SEPTEMBER, 1982 FITZWILLIAM COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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